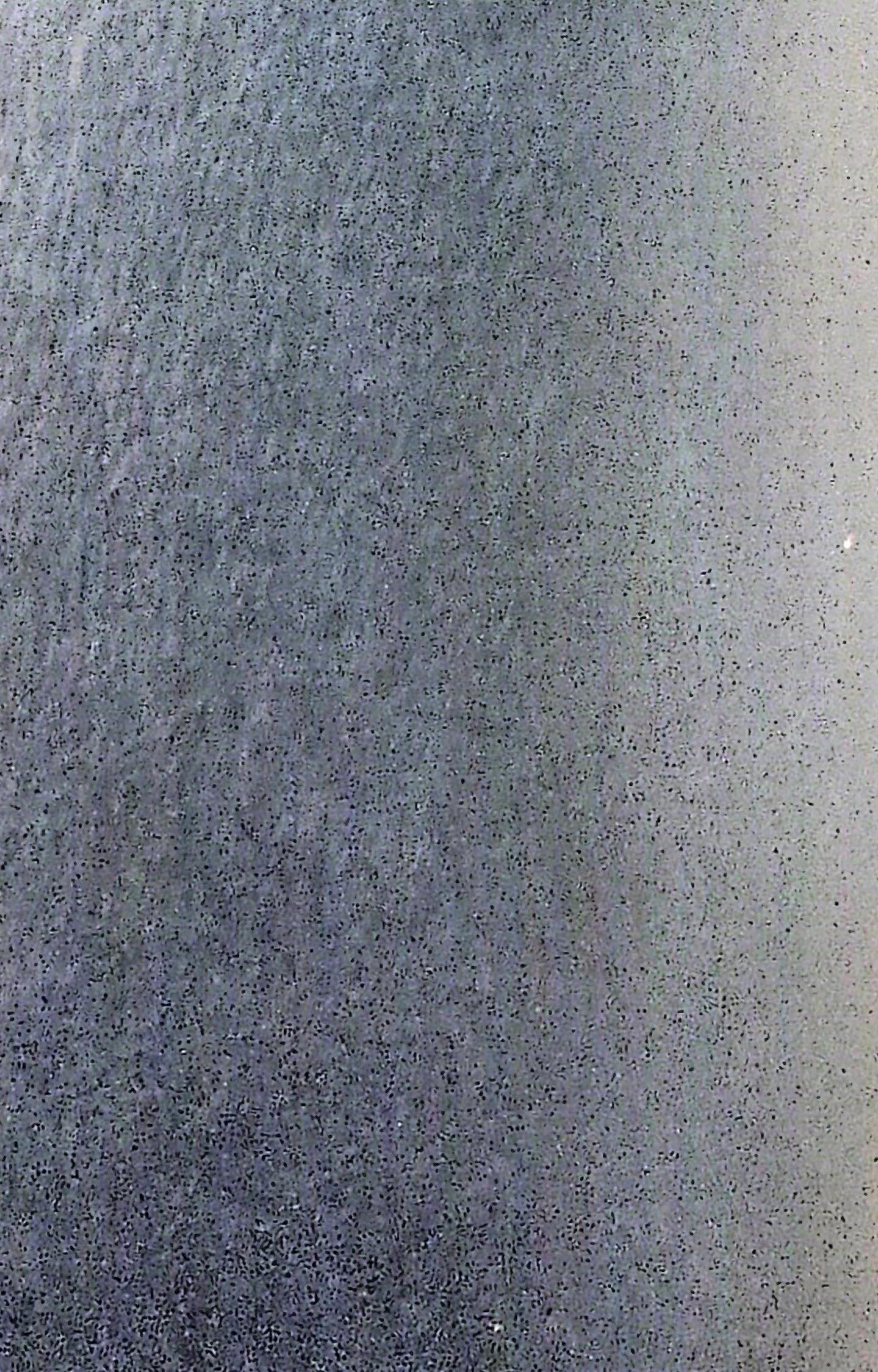


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THE DIWAN OF ABU TAYYIB  
AHMAD IBN AL HUSAIN AL  
MUTANABBI

A. Wormhoudt







The Diwan  
of  
Abu Tayyib Ahmad ibn al Husain al Mutanabbi

translated from the text of

Abu al Hasan Ali ibn Ahmad al Wahidi al Naisaburi  
(d. 468/1075)

by

Arthur Wormhoudt

William Penn College  
1971

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## FOREWORD

The longer poems in the Diwan are called qasidas. They have a three part structure which consists of an opening section called the nasib. In it the poet thinks of himself as a lover abandoned by his departed mistress while he complains at the deserted campsite or tell. The middle section is called rehla. It describes the journey of the poet to his patron. The final section is called madih. In it the poet praises his patron. This pattern undergoes considerable variation but it will be useful for the reader to keep it in mind as he reads the longer poems.

Each poem is made up of couplets which are self-contained in meaning. Often each half of the couplet is self-contained. The whole poem has a monorhyme which repeats the same sound from beginning to end. Sometimes this is true for the half lines. There are as many as sixteen different meters and each can be varied.

The Diwan as a whole is divided into five sections as listed in the Table of Contents. The first two were written for patrons who resided in Syria. The middle one was written for patrons in Egypt. The last two were written for patrons residing in Persia.

In addition to the commentary of al Wahidi, I have consulted the commentaries of al Ukbari (d. 616/1219), al Yaziji (d. 1871), Sadir, and al Barquqi. I also wish to thank Mr. Khairy Sharif, a native of Hebron, Jordan, and Mr. Iskandar Shabo, a native of Kameshli, Syria, along with those mentioned in my earlier translation from the poems of al Mutanabbi in 1968.



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## SHAWMIYYAT

1 Abu Tayyib Ahmad ibn al Husain al Mutanabbi was born at Kufa in Kinda in the year 303 A.H. and grew up in Syria and the desert. And he spoke verses in his youth. These are among the first verses that he spoke in his youth. (5)

Love wastes my body terribly on a day of parting  
The flight has scared sleep from my eyelids  
Breath comes and goes in this toothpick so that  
As wind blows clothes from it, it doesn't show  
Sufficient emaciation for my body! I am a man who  
But for my speech with you, you would not see.

2 He spoke also these in his youth impromptu. (6)

My father! he was one I loved and we parted  
But Allah decided after that to unite us  
And so we parted a year and when we met  
His greeting to me was a farewell.

3 He spoke also in his youth praising Muhammad ibn Ubaid Allah the Alawi. (6)

Welcome to a camp whose soft one captured you  
Gone are its virgins who went away from you  
You remained there gathered around a liver  
Well-cooked, its hand over its thin cover  
O drivers of her camel, thus I think to myself,  
I shall be found dead before I lose her  
Stop a little with her for me, even if I am  
Not nourished by the least bit of a glance  
In the heart of the lover is the fire of love  
The hottest fire of hell is cooler than it  
The parting of his locks has greyed from flight  
Their black has become like white damask  
They went on with the soft woman whose flanks  
Almost when she arose seemed to make her sit  
A tall woman whose lips are of the darkest red  
A fine woman who is whitest when disrobed  
O you who blame lovers, leave these people alone  
Allah led them astray, how can you guide them?  
For reproof has no influence on aspirations

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The closer you are the farther you are  
 Wretched nights when I was awake in my emotion  
     Longing for him who spent them sleeping  
 I lived through them and tears relieved me  
     Their channels and darkness relieved them  
 My camel does not take on an extra rider nor  
     Do I urge her on with a whip on racing days  
 A shoestrap is her saddle, the sandal tongue  
     Her bridle, and shoestring her lead rope  
 The hardest blow of the wind is outdistanced  
     Beneath me, in her stepping she goes slowly  
 Over the back of what seems a shield joined to  
     The hollow of a like shield to make hills  
 They are flinging us onward to Ibn Ubaid Allah  
     Both its valleys and its rough places  
 To the young man who comes back with lances  
     He waters them their drinking in hearts  
 He has gifts for me that make a precedent  
     I count some but I cannot make a census  
 He makes gifts and his delay does not spoil them  
     Nor by it does his favor diminish in them  
 Best of the Quraish as to father, most glorious  
     Greatest of them in giving and most generous  
 Most piercing with spear and most slashing  
     With the sword, their chief who leads them  
 Most chivalrous when he rides and longest armed  
     When he shakes hands, their raider, their Cid  
 He is the crown of Luway ibn Ghalib and in him  
     The branches spread for them and the roots  
 The sun that strikes them and moon of their night  
     The pearl of their necklace and their topaz  
 O would that I might suffer such a scar for them  
     As was allotted to him who is their Muhammad  
 He left a trace upon it and on the iron but  
     The Indian steel does not impress his face  
 It was happy when it saw that it was adorned  
     With such as him and that wounds envied it  
 Men became sure that he who planted this  
     By craft in his heart would harvest from it  
 The jealous come to light and they themselves  
     His fear brings down and he sets them up  
 The scabbard weeps over the blade of the sword  
     When he warns it that he is unsheathing it  
 It is her experience that it will become bloody  
     And that he will sheathe it in the necks  
 He sets it free and the enemy due to terror  
     Condemns it but the faithful praise it  
 The fire is flashed from its concussion  
     Gushing blood from necks extinguishes it  
 When a warrior loses his heart's blood  
     One day their edges will inform of it  
 These people have agreed with me that you  
     O son of the prophet, are unique among them

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And you, when you were just coming of age,  
Were an elder of Ma'ad though of their youths  
How many and how many are the splendid graces  
    You nurtured after they were born from you  
How many, many needs you have been generous to  
    Their promises were nearer to me than myself  
Many a fine coat comes on feet of benevolence  
    Arriving at my residence again and again  
He delights my skin with them for my sake nor  
    Will I be able to disown them until death  
Come back with them so I will never lack them  
    The best of fine gifts is their returning.

4 Someone said to him when he was in a bookshop: How fine this hair is! So he said. (15)

Locks are not fine until they are seen  
With the braids undone on the day of battle  
On a youth grasping the short lance and  
Giving it drink from all with full beards.

5 He spoke in his youth as he passed two men who had just killed a rat and they were showing him as the people wondered at the size of him. (16)

The raiding rat has come to light  
Death has bound him down to ruin  
Kinany and Aamir have aimed at him  
Pursued him in the way Arabs do  
Both of the men were near to the killing  
Which of you plunders the goodly spoil?  
Which of you was closest behind him  
For he has tooth marks on his tail!

6 He spoke also in his youth mocking the Qadi al-Dhahabi. (17)

When you were pedigreeed you were a fatherless son  
You were tested and had no recourse to culture  
You were named al Dhahabi on the day of naming  
Derived from "loss of wits" not from "golden one"  
Surname with you O not you named by it, too bad!  
O nickname dumped on top of the surname!

7 He spoke also praising a man who wanted him to reveal his origin. (17)

Leave me, anxiety taught me, alas, your blame  
 Painfully arising in the starless breast  
 And the ghost of a body love has not left  
 Either flesh or blood since illness wastes it  
 And throbbing heart which if you saw its flame  
 You would suspect it, O heavens, to be hell  
 Then a cloud on the mountain side of love flashed  
 Leaving the sweetness of every love bitter  
 O face of shrewd Dahiya, if it were not for you  
 Languor would not eat my body or crush bones  
 If consolation has enriched her then indeed  
 I am impoverished due to her and my love  
 A sapling growing on a double desert hillock  
 The sun of day that bears the dark of night  
 These contrasts did not unite in seeming likeness  
 Except to make of me the booty of affliction  
 Like the qualities of our unique Abu Fadl which  
 Overcome, so he endows his poets and he quiets  
 He gives to you first of all and if you press him  
 He gives with excuses like one who has sinned  
 He looks at pride so that it seems to be low  
 He sees humility as if it were greatness  
 He preserves a good action from delay as if  
 He thought the request for a gift improper  
 O king who is made as pure as a jewel by Him  
 Who has the kingdom, highest of the highest  
 A light is manifested in you that is divine  
 Almost you know wisdom not to be known  
 Its purpose is in you when you speak eloquently  
 In every limb of you to make an utterance  
 I have understanding yet I feel that I am asleep  
 But who dreams of Allah as I am dreaming?  
 The eyes grow large in me until it is certain  
 To these eyes that they are led into error  
 O he, by the bounty of gifts from his wealth, is  
 Revenge that returns as mercy for the orphan  
 So that mankind says: This is not intelligent.  
 And the treasury says: This is not Muslim.  
 Memory of such as you is my neglect of it  
 Since one needs no interpreter for what I want. 20

8 He spoke also in his youth. (21)

O friends of my staying, what of your edge  
 Free of wounds, innocent of death?  
 I see in my temper a fragment of its steel  
 Thirst to strike skulls in thirst for honing  
 The green of life's garment is in freshness that  
 Shows you red death in the ants' tracks  
 Cease from any comparison of me with like and as  
 For no one is above me and none like me

Leave that to me along with my horse and spear  
 Let us be one raid on men and let them see my act.

9 He spoke also in his youth. (23)

How long will you go in the dress of a pilgrim  
 Until when in misery and how many years?  
 If you do not die under the swords generously  
 Die and suffer basely without nobility  
 So jump, trusting in Allah, in a leap of glory  
 Seeing death in battle, honeycomb in mouth.

10 He spoke in his youth in Syria praising Abdullah the Kilabi. (24)

I live and the easiest I suffered is what kills  
 But parting oppressed my weakness unjustly  
 Longing increases as distance grows ever greater  
 Patience wears thin in my body as it wastes  
 Except for the departure of the beloved the fates  
 Would not find themselves a way to our souls  
 By a magic in your eyes giving me mortal illness  
 One loves life but if you block it, then not  
 If he does not grow old yet his lover grows gray  
 With age and if solace lends color it fades  
 Insane with love, if it were not that a perfume  
 Visits him on an east wind he could not be sane  
 So look on or think of me whom you know in flames  
 One not tasting a look at her for it escaped  
 Perhaps the Emir sees my shame and intercedes  
 With her who left my love to make me a proverb  
 I am sure that Sa'id will seek revenge for me  
 When I see him with his lance held ready  
 I surely cannot count the favors of his father  
 Gifts like Zuhal beside my gift of limning him  
 A great lord whose seat is Manbij and whose gifts  
 On horizons seek those who do not ask for them  
 A moon at dusk shines in the court of his face  
 And death attacks in the battle if he attacks  
 His dust for the Kilab was kohl to their eyes  
 And his sword against the Janab overcame blame  
 Ancestor's virtue is a cloud giving rain in him  
 A sweetness as if his character were honey  
 A hole is torn in the heaven of fame by his glory  
 If an idea of it rose there it would never set  
 He is the prince by whom the Tamim were destroyed  
 Once, and their ruin led them to their death  
 When they saw him and the horses of victory near  
 And battle continuing they yielded their camp

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The earth became too narrow when they were routed  
 When one saw nothing he thought it a man  
 After him and to this day if they were to run  
 Horses in a baby's throat it wouldn't cough  
 You have left those you encountered slaughtered 20  
 And killed with fear those you did not encounter  
 Many a far desert, where the heart of a guide is  
 The heart of a lover, rewards me after delay  
 I fixed my eyes on the star in that wasteland  
 My face was free to the hot sun when it set  
 I pounded its hard stones with hoofs of a camel  
 Taking me by force to you over plain and peak  
 If you were in my clothes and on its saddle cloth  
 You would hear jinn howling in their hollows  
 Until I arrive with a soul most of which is dead 25  
 Would that I could live on that which is left  
 I hope for your bounty and I do not fear delay  
 O if he gave the world he would be miserly.

11 And he said also in his youth. (29)

How many the slain, martyred as I was slain  
 By the white of a throat and a red cheek  
 And by eyes of a wild fawn not like the eyes  
 That overcame one passionately enslaved  
 Flow stream of youth O days when my skirt  
 Trailed in Dar Athla--come back to me!  
 Your life with Allah! have you seen such moons  
 Rising among the veils and the necklaces?  
 Arrows whose feathers are eyelashes strike 5  
 And pierce the heart before the skin  
 They suck from my mouth some of those drops  
 Which there are sweeter than the Unity  
 Each slim-waisted one more delicate than wine  
 Has a heart that is harder than stone  
 Possessed of locks ambergris has drenched  
 Mingled with rose water and incense  
 They are black as the raven, full of darkness  
 Very thick in waves but not frizzled  
 The wind carries the musk from her braids  
 She smiles with her cool even-spaced teeth  
 She combines the body of Ahmad and sickness  
 And the eyelids with this sleeplessness  
 Here is my heart with you for my destruction  
 So diminish its pain in me or increase it  
 I welcome the emaciation that I have as a hero  
 Hunted by ringlets on a brow and a neck  
 Everything pertaining to blood is forbidden  
 For drinking except the blood of the vine  
 So pour it out since I am ransom for your eyes 10  
 Among gazelles as are my goods and heritage  
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My head's gray hair, shame and my emaciation  
 And my tears are my witnesses to your love  
 What day have you made me happy with embrace  
 You didn't scare me three days with denial?  
 My remaining in Dar Nakhla is exactly similar  
 To the stay of the Messiah among the Jews  
 My bed is the saddle upon my stallion  
 And still my shirt was woven of iron  
 Close knit and flowing like a pool that flashes      20  
 With David's hand they worked its weave  
 What is my benefit if I am satisfied with times  
 When life rushes onward with its harshness?  
 My breast is anxious and my stay in search  
 Of food is long so there is little rest for me  
 Always I traverse the countries and my stars  
 Are in decline but my purpose aspires  
 Perhaps hopes will somehow be fulfilled  
 By the kindness of the rare one praised  
 By a prince whose garment is coarse cotton      25  
 But Mervian silk is dress for the apes  
 Live powerfully or die yet you are generous  
 Amid thrusting lances and flutter of flags  
 The heads of spears dissolve wrath the best  
 Best cure for boiling rage in a breast  
 Not as you have lived without any praise  
 And then you die, die without being missed!  
 Seek glory in the fire and leave humiliation  
 Even though it be in immortal paradise  
 The coward weakling is done to death and indeed      30  
 He faints at the flutter of a child's veil  
 But the intrepid youth is guarded and surely  
 Wades in the water of a generous breast  
 Not by my family am I great, they are so by me  
 I boast of myself not of my ancestors  
 They were the pride of everyone who used dad  
 Asylum for a culprit and aid for refugee  
 If I am surprising yet the wonder of wonders is  
 One does not find any higher than him  
 I am twin of reward and the master of rhyme      35  
 The scourge of a foe and the rage of envy  
 I am among these people, may Allah repay them,  
 A stranger like Salih among the Thamud.

12 He spoke impromptu in his youth when Ubaid Allah ibn Khorasan made him a gift of a candy fish with almonds in honey. (35)

Many expectations have kept men busy  
 While you are busy with noble actions  
 They make an ideal of Hatim but if they knew  
 You would be the point of a liberal proverb

Welcome and greetings to what you have sent  
Enough for Abu Qasim and the messengers  
A gift whose giver I did not see  
Unless I saw mankind as a single man  
The least of the platter is the fish  
That is swimming in a pool of honey  
How shall I requite this best of presents  
To one who doesn't see it as a gift for me.

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13 He wrote to him again on the sides of a pot of saffron. (36)

Stop, for you cannot increase love for me  
That attains the goal and exceeds limit  
You sent it overflowing with generosity  
And I returned it filled with thanks  
It comes to you brimful though it is empty  
Double praise but you think it single  
Your character denies that which it ennobled  
Does it not long for and recall a bond?  
If you were a season that produced flowers  
You would be spring and they the roses.

14 He spoke about a sudden stop and the rain and wind were striking him. (37)

We are the remnant who inform of destruction  
Exhausted by travel like drinkers of wine  
We settled in this mosque by decree of the wind  
Upon us, from it a cloak of sand and dust  
My two friends, this station is not for such as us  
So saddle up and be off while it is light  
Do not ignore the blowing winds for they are  
Host to guests staying a night with Siwwar.

15 He spoke also in his youth praising Abu Muntasir  
Shuja ibn Muhammad ibn Aus Ma'an ibn Rida the Azdi. (38)

Waking upon wakefulness but such as I must wake  
Grief increases and the tears begin to flow  
The hardship of passion is to be as I seem to be  
A sleepless eye and a palpitating heart  
The lightning does not flash nor any bird sing  
Without my turning away and my heart torn  
I experienced the fire of love inextinguishable  
A fire of gatha wood is weak by its burning

I blamed the people of love until I tasted it 5  
Then I wondered how one died who did not love  
And I excused them and I knew my sin when I  
Reproached them, for I met what they met  
0 sons of our father, we are people of the camp  
Always the raven of parting croaks in it  
We weep over the world but there are no people  
That the world collects and does not scatter  
Where are the mighty Chosroes of the first ages  
Storing up treasure that did not stay nor they?  
For each the plain was too narrow for his army 10  
Until he died and then a narrow tomb held him  
Silent when called as if they did not know  
That words for them were permitted and free  
For death comes even to the most precious souls  
One beguiled by his wealth is most absurd  
A man hopes and living is longing for something  
And age is burdened and youth is headlong  
I have wept for my youth when locks over my ear  
Were black and sweat on my face had a color  
And worried about it before the day of departure 15  
Until I almost choked with tears of my eyelids  
But as for the people of Aus ibn Ma'an ibn Rida  
He honors one who turns his camel toward him  
I extolled the power of their house when a sun  
Came out of it yet there was no dawn there  
I was surprised at earth when the clouds poured  
From above and its rocks did not grow leaves  
Their perfume in the praise of goodness spreads  
In all of the places where it is inhaled  
Musky in the exhalation except that it is 20  
Foreign to others and does not cling to them  
0 you who seek the like of Muhammad in our age  
Do not trouble us with an unattainable search  
The Merciful has never created one like Muhammad  
And it is my suspicion that He will not do so  
0 you who are giving so much and through whom  
I by taking it am able to give alms with it  
Rain down on me the cloud of your bounty richly  
And glance at me in mercy so I do not drown  
A son of a meddler lies who says in his ignorance  
That bounty is dead when you live to provide. 25

16 He spoke again in his youth praising Ali ibn Ahmad al Khorasani. (42)

A bit of a soul took leave on the day they went  
I know not which voyager's funeral I escorted  
They waved goodbye and we were liberal with souls  
Pouring from eyes and the tears were poison  
My entrails are on coals blazing with passion  
But my eyes are grazing in meadows of beauty

If mountain tops were loaded with what we were  
 The morning we parted they would quickly split  
 By that in my breast, it is she whose spirit came  
 To me in darkness while the carefree slept  
 She came visiting, perfume not touching her dress  
 But like musk on her sleeve it spread afar  
 She did not sit, then she turned to lengthen step  
 Like a weaning nurse before the suckling  
 My wonder at her scared off what came with her  
 From sleep and the distressed heart burned  
 O that night which has expanded as I passed it  
 Poison of the snake was sweet which I drank  
 Submit to her and be humble whether near or far  
 He is no lover who is not abased and lowly  
 Nor any garment of glory except robe of Ibn Ahmad  
 On anyone unless it is patched with meanness  
 He is one who gave richly to the Jadila of Tai  
 By him Allah gives what he wishes and refuses  
 In this is nobility; no day passes that the sun  
 Rises on a head richer in conscience than his  
 So the wombs of knowledge are attached to him  
 And the wombs of wealth continue to divide  
 A youth whose ideas for his age have myriad parts  
 The least bit of any is mind for all others  
 A cloud, to us he is rain that does not wash off  
 Nor is false lightning in him when it flashes  
 When a needy one turns to him then he himself  
 Intercedes as a mediator with himself in it  
 Flames of war die out if his fingers do not stir  
 And brown reed bare of bark is all too smooth  
 The slender ends on the middle of its head run  
 Barefoot and its run is fortified when cut  
 Its tongue pours the darkness on the lightness  
 What is not heard is grasped by all who speak  
 Sword's edge is avoidable in the strike, and  
 More rebel to its lord, but pen is more loyal  
 If a cloud had touched it with generous hand  
 Its place wouldn't pass in lands east or west  
 So eloquent when it discourses it finds each word  
 As a root of beauty that ramifies itself  
 Not like the sea of water where whales and frogs  
 Can plumb depths to where water ceases  
 Is a sea that hinders the needy, and has a taste  
 So bitter, like a sea that bars none but aids?  
 The finest thought is perplexed by his far deeps  
 And drowns in the wave that is his eloquence  
 Hail to you O chieftain who resides in Manbij  
 Whose aspiration is set above the Two Fish  
 Is it not strange your description is a miracle  
 And that my thought limps up to your height?  
 And that you are in robes and your heart in you  
 And yet it is wider than the court of earth?  
 And your heart in a world that if it entered it  
 With us and jinn they would not find a return?

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Is not every generosity except yours today vanity  
And every praise except for yours misplaced?

17 He spoke in his youth through the tongue of some of  
the Tanukhi when they asked this of him. (48)

Qudha knows that I am that young man  
Whom they saved for calamities of time  
And my renown points to the Banu Khindif  
Since everything noble comes from Yemen  
I am the son of battle, the son of bounty  
Son of slashing and son of thrusting  
I am son of the desert and son of caravan  
Son of saddle and son of mountain side  
Long the sword hanger, high the tent pole  
Long the lance shaft, high the point  
Iron are the grips and iron are glances  
Iron the saber and iron the shield  
My sword outdistances the deaths of mankind  
Ahead of them as if they were in a race  
Its blade sees into the obscurity of heart  
When I am in whirlwinds I see not myself  
I will establish it as judgment on souls  
If my tongue is agent for it, it will do.

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18 He spoke also in his youth. (49)

Stay you two. See my rain for there is a cloud  
And do not fear the opposite when I speak  
The vile man attacked me with blows on his butt  
Another had cotton as stones in his hands  
In his ignorance he was blind to his ignorance  
Witless of my knowledge that he was witless  
He didn't know that as king of earth I'd be poor  
Or if on the backs of Two Fish I'd still walk  
My desire makes contemptible to me every object  
A seeming distant goal is limited in my eyes  
I was still the mountain whose heights had no end  
Until calamities appeared to me as injustice  
I was disquieted by concern that stirred my breast  
With fastest of camels all of which are brisk  
When night had veiled us her hoofs showed us  
In sparks from stones what flame never showed  
On the back of the strong camel I was on a wave  
Driving me on the seas which have no shores  
It seemed to me the deserts were in my hearing  
And I was for them what the gossips say  
He who wants what I want of glory and eminence  
Finds life and death of equal value to him

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O there is no business except it be your lives  
 And no entreaty between us except swords  
 What they drink of the soul of man is his spirit  
 They don't return from a miser even if he is so  
 Emaciation of my life is the thinness of my honor  
 And not the thinness that the food makes.

19 And he spoke also in his youth. (52)

A guest without modesty has come to my head  
 The sword would do better for my locks than it  
 Be off! remove whiteness with no splendor in it  
 You are more black in my eye than the dark  
 With love my killer and white hair my nourishing  
 My love was childish, my gray puberty attained  
 I do not pass a camp trace without asking it  
 Nor a veiled one without shedding of my blood  
 She sighed for a loyalty that was not divided  
 On the day of parting and people not united  
 I kissed her and my tears mingled with her tears  
 And she kissed me in fear, mouth to mouth  
 Then I tasted the water of life from her lips  
 If it fell on dust it would revive past men  
 She looked at me with the eyes of a tearful fawn  
 Touching the dew on the roses with her fingers  
 Go slow with your unfair judgment against us  
 For I am ransom with all men as judge  
 You discovered just what I discovered of anxiety 10  
 But you did not pick what I picked in pain  
 Then a bit of it tore from a robe of beauty  
 And you went as I in double dress of illness  
 There is no making pleas for hope in my object  
 Nor any content with poverty in my character  
 Nor do I suspect time's daughters will leave me  
 Until my aspirations bar the way for them  
 Blame the nights that betrayed my good fortune  
 With poor estate and pardon, don't blame me  
 I see men but my result is nothing but sheep 15  
 There is memory of bounty but my pay is words  
 And some lord of wealth who is poor in manliness  
 Not rich by it as he is rich in nonentity  
 The blade will have a friend in me like its edge  
 And my story as bravest of the brave results  
 I have been patient until patience is no more  
 So now I rush ahead until rushing is no more  
 I will leave the faces of the horses mutilated  
 While war is more fixed than a leg on a foot  
 And thrusting burns and the press shakes them  
 Until it is as if they had a kind of mania  
 The long spears wound them as they are stern  
 As if on their bits colocynth were bound 20

With each fighting man who is always expecting  
 That I show him some of the empire of slaves  
 Old men who look on five prayers as unnecessary  
 And justify blood of pilgrims in sanctuary  
 Whenever they are gored by him under a dust cloud  
 The regiment of lions flee him but he flees not  
 My flash makes the land forget sky lightning 25  
 And suffices with flowing blood for rain  
 Drink from the pool of death my soul and leave  
 A trough of fear of death to sheep and cattle  
 If I do not let you flow over the spear point  
 I am not named son of mother glory or bounty  
 Shall that rule a kingdom with swords thirsty and  
 Birds hungry--that flesh on' a butcher's table?  
 One who if he saw me as a pool would die of thirst  
 And if I appeared to him in sleep he would wake?  
 The rendezvous of all the thin blades is tomorrow 30  
 And of those Arab and foreign kings who disobey  
 If they reply my object for these is not in them  
 If they turn I will not content these with them.

20 He said also in his youth when Abu Sa'id Mukhaimar chided him on avoiding the meeting with kings. (59)

Abu Sa'id, put aside the complaint  
 Many an opinion is wide of the mark  
 For they multiply the curtains  
 And set up doorkeepers to reject us  
 But the edge of the cutting sword  
 And the brown lance and the horse  
 Raise whatever veils are between us.

21 And he said also in his youth impromptu in the character of one who asked him this. (60)

My love for you denies the pleasure of my sleep  
 You went away but that stayed in my breast  
 O did not you find in the Sera the saltiness  
 Which I poured into the Forat with my tears  
 I was wary of the turmoil of your departure  
 Until the pain overcame me at the farewell  
 Patience rode away in my saddle and it was as if  
 I followed it with my sighs as funeral escort.

22 And he spoke also in his youth impromptu. (60)

What halting place shall I advance to  
 What great thing can I fear

For all that Allah has created  
 And what he has not yet created  
 Is despised by my ambition  
 As a hair in the parting of my locks.

23 And he said in his youth. (60)

When you find nothing to dock poverty by sitting  
 Then get up and find something to dock life.

24 He replied to a man who said: I greeted you and you  
 did not return the greeting. (60)

I am critical of your criticism  
 Amazed at your amazement  
 Since I, when you encountered me,  
 Was complaining of your absence  
 I was busy with returning your greeting  
 My inattention to you was for your sake.

25 He said in his youth. (60)

Aid with your bounty the words by which I leave  
 In east and west those who hate you abased  
 I waited for you until my saddling time came  
 And this farewell, for take what you will.

26 He said also in his youth but did not recite to  
 anyone. (61)

Cautious of the guard but his thoughts tricked him  
 He curbed tears but their urgency fell heavy  
 He who hides love is revealed on a day of parting  
 The friend of tears has secrets not to be hid  
 Except for fawns of Ad I do not grieve for them  
 Nor for their herd except for the young ones  
 For each black-eyed one with purity on its teeth  
 A wine mingled with musk intoxicates it  
 Intensely white is its brow, dark are its eyebrows  
 Red are its veils, black its plaits of hair  
 It lends me the languor of its eye and loads me  
 With a weight of desire like its belt holds  
 O you who judge my soul and then punish me  
 And who assist my heart in my death  
 At the return of beauty's power a second time  
 I am consoled for you and night's watcher sleeps

After what my night that had no dawn was it seems  
 As if the first of the last day was its end  
 The Emir was gone and good vanished from the land 10  
 Its pulpits almost wept at the loss of his name  
 Its houses complained of the solitude of the living  
 And its tombs told of the grief of the dead  
 Until that time when his tent was set up here  
 His townspeople and his bedouin shouted Allah!  
 It renewed joy and grief did not pursue him  
 Nor did affection in a heart stray from him  
 When Homs was empty of you--may it never be empty!  
 Its dawn did not water it with a first shower  
 You entered it as rays of the sun were kindling 15  
 Light of your face among horsemen dazzled it  
 If you attacked with ironclad cavalry troop as  
 Changes of fate, its reverses would not occur  
 The procession moves on and the eyes are lifted  
 From it to a king whose augury is fortunate  
 They are dazzled by the face in his crown, a moon  
 In his armor, a lion whose claws are bloody  
 His tempers are sweet, his real cares are proud  
 A number counted before his benefits counted  
 Too narrow for his army the world and if as wide 20  
 As his bosom his troops could not camp there  
 When the thoughts of a man enter upon the borders  
 Of his glory his thoughts are drowned therein  
 Swords are a defense against his enemy with him  
 As if they were his sons or his tribe  
 When he unsheathes them in war they leave no body  
 Unless its inside become outward to the eye  
 And they make certain that truth is in his hand  
 And they guarantee that Allah is his helper  
 They left the skulls of the Banu Auf and Thalab 25  
 Its helmets on heads without the bodies  
 With his sword he wades a sea of death that is  
 Behind them and the tide is up to the ankles  
 Until the horse gains the course and his hoofs  
 Do not hit the earth due to the stinking dead  
 How much blood his spear heads drink from him  
 And how much gore his swords lap up there  
 Many death hours the brown lance sported with him  
 Life has fled from and the eagles visited him  
 He who said you were not the best of all men had 30  
 As excuse with men that he did not know you  
 Or doubted you were the only one in their times  
 Without a peer but with my soul I pledge it  
 O he is one in whom I take refuge for what I hope  
 One in whom I seek safety from what I fear  
 And the one whose hand I imagined was an ocean  
 Of generosity and whose gifts were its gems  
 Men cannot mend a bone when you have broken it  
 Nor break again a bone that you have healed  
 Pity a young man for whom the hand of grief  
 Ruined his luck and whose hope faded in prison. 35

27 He spoke praising Shuja ibn Muhammad ibn al-Aziz, the Tai of Manbij. (66)

Rare is a cure for one whose illness is wide eyes  
 A disease from which lovers before this died  
 Let him who will look at me, for the sight of me  
 Is a warning to one who thinks love is easy  
 It is nothing but a glimpse after a glimpse  
 When it settles in a heart reason saddles up  
 Her love runs the course of my blood in my limbs  
 There is work for me in her apart from all work  
 She captured me with pretty coquetry decking her  
 She put kohl on her eyes but had no collyrium  
 As if glances of the eye in its violence to us  
 Were a hostile guard or an enemy breaking in  
 Sickness has not preserved a hair of my body  
 Or less, though there is some kind of activity  
 When they blame me for this I answer with a sigh  
 My little darling heart, my soul, O beauty  
 As if your guard had prevented my hearing  
 The blame, so complaint could not enter there  
 As if wakefulness at night loved my eyeballs and  
 Between them in every parting was a bond for us  
 I love her whose comparison is in the full moon  
 But I long for one whom likeness cannot hit  
 For the only one in the world, for Ibn Muhammad  
 Brave, for whom virtue is Allah's, then his  
 For that sweet fruit which is of the branches of  
 Tai and Qahtan ibn Hud is the root of him  
 For a chief who if Allah spoke to people without  
 A prophet the messenger would speak in him  
 For a grasper of souls and of lion-heroes  
 Whose wars horsemen and soldiers relate  
 For the lord of wealth; each time sums scatter  
 Parting gathers in dispersion to grandeur  
 A hero who when his sword leaves the scabbard  
 And you see him you don't know which is blade  
 You saw the son of mother death; if his courage  
 Spreads to men of earth the breed will cease  
 On a swimmer with a wave of death at his throat  
 Always, as if arrows on his breast were but rain  
 How many eyes of heroes stare at his attack and  
 Do not blink, O spears are kohl for them  
 If one called: Mercy! he said: A place for Mercy!  
 But man's pity in another place is stupidity  
 Except for his trusting himself with pity's burden  
 Earth would fall and the load collapse with it  
 The hopeful have been wide of every goal and  
 Roads are narrow for them except to your door  
 Bounty calls the sleepers to the night journey  
 Tells them: Arise! stinginess is destroyed  
 The gifts of his hand come before his promises  
 Nor does he break promises or make delay

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Nearer than their limit is the return of the past  
 Easier than their numbering raindrops and sand  
 How can the days punish one for whom their ways  
 Are the shoe on his foot in rough places  
 The intention he aims at does not conquer him  
 If he weakened it would only be to his like  
 Enough praise for Thuella you are one of them  
 For the age, that its people are your family  
 And Wa'il have got glory for themselves from you      30  
 Blessed are eyes not free of you an hour  
 No need among the poor to sniff your lightning  
 Nor sterility in a land if you are its shower.

28 He spoke also praising Shuja ibn Muhammad the Tai of Manbij. (72)

It is tryst day with you, but where is the promise?  
 O no tomorrow for the day of your departure  
 Death has easier claws than this your abandonment  
 Life is more distant than you. Do not go!  
 She who sheds my blood with her eyelashes surely  
 Does not know that my blood will be on her  
 She saw my paleness and said: What is his trouble?  
 She sighed so I said: The sighing sickness.  
 Away she went and shame colored her whiteness      5  
 My color was like gilding that colors silver  
 I saw the horn of the sun on the moon of darkness  
 Declining, a branch was bending near it  
 She is of the Ady bedouin and in front of her  
 Is booty of souls and a fire of war is lit  
 And wayless deserts and the horses and swords  
 The spears and the menaces and the threats  
 She showed her love in nights after we had gone  
 And fate went against her but it was hobbled  
 You go too far, O doctor of eyelids in the sick--      10  
 His doctor is ill and the nurse is visited!  
 Yet his are the people of Abd al-Aziz ibn al-Rida  
 Deserts and their camels are for any convoy  
 Who among men of noble rank does not say:  
 Who among you, Syria, except Shuja is sought for?  
 He gives so I said: What he owns is his bounty.  
 He attacks so I said: What is born is his sword's.  
 The descriptions lose their way with him because  
 They follow his paths on which they go far  
 In every battle the kidneys must suffer      15  
 They blame in him what the spear heads praise  
 Vengeance on vengeance of fate he inflicts on them  
 As grace upon grace which cannot be disowned  
 In his affairs both his tongue and fingers and  
 His heart are wonderful to those who seek them  
 Courageous, the blood of a fierce lion is his dye  
 Terrible, the hackles of death tremble at him

Manbij when you are absent is nothing but an eye  
 Watching and your face is its repose and eyeshade  
 And the night when you approach in it is bright 20  
 And the dawn when you depart from it is dark  
 While you gradually come near it rises in pride  
 Until the double pole star recedes in its dust  
 Any other city would have had eminence like it  
 If such as you were found in such another  
 Enemies display happiness for you as if they  
 Rejoiced though they have persistent anxiety  
 You ruin them by envy to show them what they are  
 They are ruined by envy of one without envy  
 If they beat a retreat the heat of their hearts 25  
 In the heart of noon would melt the rocks  
 Foreign chiefs watched but saw none of theirs  
 When they saw you so they said: He is a chief!  
 All of them remain as if you were all of them  
 And you stay among them as if you were alone  
 Disquieting, your fury wants to plague mankind  
 Unless reason and leadership should deter you  
 Be wherever you like our camels will reach you  
 For earth is one and you alone are unique  
 Preserve the sword and do not degrade it for it 30  
 Indicts by your right hand and skulls witness  
 The blood dries on it and though it is free from  
 The scabbard it sees it is in a sheath  
 Copious, if it vomited what you give it to drink  
 A foaming sea of blood would flow  
 Death does not share in the blood from a heart  
 Unless his blade in her hand gives aid  
 Truly the raids and the bounty and spears are  
 Allies for Tai whether defeating or rescuing 35  
 Take care, O Julhuma, they come forth to you and  
 The fringes of your eye are spears and swords  
 That are greater than all the mountains of Tihama  
 In heart, more generous than a morning shower  
 It meets you as if girded red with blood  
 The liver and neck make its gems disappear  
 Until one explains to you: This is their Lord!  
 And they are helpers and people most loyal  
 How can Adam be the father of all mankind when 40  
 Your father is Muhammad and you men and jinn?  
 Words waste away unguarded by your description  
 Will what fades be kept by the inexhaustible?

29 He spoke of Abu Dulaf ibn Khundaj and he had made a pledge with him in prison. (79)

I am used to length of imprisonment and wasting  
 To the dungeon and the chains O Abu Dulaf  
 Not by choice did I accept your good work for me  
 Hunger makes lions content with carrion

Be whatever you will O dungeon for certainly  
 I become used to death with patient soul  
 If my stay with you were to be decreased  
 There would be no pearl in the oyster shell.

30 He spoke in his youth and people had falsely accused  
 him to the authority who imprisoned him and he wrote  
 to him and while he was in prison praised him and he  
 absolved him from what he was imprisoned for. (80)

O may Allah split the roses on those cheeks  
 And cut the waists of slim-waisted beauties  
 They have made the blood flow from my eyes  
 And punished my heart with long absence  
 How many youths are seriously ill with love  
 How many dead are martyrs to absence?  
 O what a pity! How bitter is separation  
 And how precious those fires in the livers  
 It has stirred up longing among the lovers  
 And killed them clinging to the beloved 5  
 It made my soul eager for what is not shameful  
 In a loved one with red lips and full breasts  
 May it be and they be ransom for the Emir  
 May there be no end to grace in provision  
 He interposed the sword in front of the threats  
 And his gifts came before the promises  
 Thus his wealth rises as a star in bad times  
 And his clients rise as stars in good times  
 And if I didn't fear anything but his enemies 10  
 For him, I would announce him as an immortal  
 He attacks Aleppo with the forelocks of horses  
 And brown lances that drip blood in the dust  
 Many the swords that are travelers who do not stop  
 Either at the neck or in the scabbard  
 They lead destruction on the morning of battle  
 To every army whose numbers are vast  
 The Kharshani retreated his obedient followers  
 Like sheep who heard the roar of the lions  
 They think the sound of the winds is fearful 15  
 The whinny of a horse or flutter of a flag  
 Who is like the Emir, son of a daughter of Emirs  
 Or who is like his fathers and grandfathers?  
 They ran to the heights and they were young  
 They ruled and gave and yet were in cradles  
 O possessor of me as a slave whose business  
 Is gifts of silver and the freeing of slaves  
 I called to you at a time when hope was cut off  
 Death for me was a rope around the jugular  
 I called to you when perishableness exhausted me  
 And the weight of irons had weakened my legs 20  
 And though their movement had once been in shoes  
 Yet their motion surely now was in chains

I have been among the gentlemen in an assembly  
And now I am with a mob of monkeys  
Shall obligatory penalties be urged upon me  
And my penalty come before duty to kneel?  
It is said: You transgressed against the world--  
Between my birth and my being able to sit!  
It is not for you to accept the word of calumny  
Strength of witness is in strength of fact  
Do not listen to any of those who brood hatred  
Do not care about the disputes of the Jews  
Distinguish between the claim: You intended it.  
And the claim: You did it in high spirits.  
As to bounty, enough for you is what you give me  
For myself, though I were more sad than Thamud.

31 He spoke to Mu'adh who blamed him for going to war.  
(84)

O Abu Abdallah Mu'adh as for myself  
My stand in the battle is hid from you  
You considered my goal too great and that  
We risked the soul of the body for it  
Can misfortune seize upon one such as I  
And he be anxious at a meeting with death?  
And if time were to appear to me in human shape  
My sword would stain the parting of its hair  
Nor will the nights achieve their purpose  
Nor pass on with my bridle in their hands  
When the eyes of the horsemen are filled with me  
Alas for them whether awake or asleep.

32 He spoke to a man who reported what people said. (85)

I am the source of rule for a great chief  
Your dogs have roused me by barking  
Are the nobly born other than nobly born  
Or those of pure race other than genuine?  
They do not know me but if I live a little yet  
Spear heads will give my ancestry to them.

33 He spoke impromptu when Abu Dhabis invited him to drink. (86)

More pleasant than the Khandarisan wine  
And sweeter than the communion of the cup  
Is the communion of the blade and the lance  
My rush with battalion against battalion

For my death in battle is my life since  
 I see this life as the reward of souls  
 But if I drank from hands of a drinking pal  
 I would rejoice that it was Abu Dhabis.

34 One of the Kilabi said to him: I drink this cup as  
 a toast to you. And he answered. (86)

Whenever you drink wine straight with pleasure  
 We drink its like as the generous drink  
 O bravo for men whose drinking pals are lances  
 They pour freely and the winebearer is resolve.

35 And he spoke impromptu in his youth. (87)

It is for my friends to fill  
 The cup with pure wine  
 It is for them to be lavish  
 And for me not to drink  
 Until there are scimitars  
 Clashing in excitement.

36 He spoke to Ibn Abd al Wahhab while his son was sit-  
 ting beside a lamp. (87)

Don't you see what I see O my lord?  
 It is as if we were in a pathless heaven  
 Is not your son one Farqad, the lamp the other?  
 You are darkness' moon, the assembly the sky.

37 He spoke and Abu Bakr the Tai fell asleep so Abu  
 Tayyib recited and awoke him. (87)

The rhymes do not make you grow sleepy but rather  
 Efface you until you are what is not found  
 As if your ear was your mouth when you heard them  
 And they an opiate on which you got drunk.

38 And he spoke also in his youth. (87)

I hid your love since it was an honor from you  
 Then my secrecy and openness became one to you  
 It seemed to rise until it overflowed my body  
 And my sickness became in my body my secrecy.

39 And he spoke when a man offered him a cup and urged him strongly to drink it. (88)

Many a brother incited us to freedom from an oath  
 To drink again and again from this Khortum  
 But I made my refusal of its spouse an atonement  
 For drinking it and thus I drank without sin.

40 He spoke praising Ubaid Allah ibn Khorasan of Tripoli.  
 (88)

O wild fawn, if it were not for the human fawn  
 I would never be in this pass of unlucky love  
 Nor would I water earth, for a cloud is contrary  
 With tears when my soul is dry with torment  
 Nor would I stand for three nights with a body  
 Worn with grief near the worn camp traces  
 A murder of her eye inquiring of the campsite  
 Killed by languor of eyelid and dark red lips  
 A virgin who if the sun saw her it would not rise      5  
 If the willow branch saw her it would not sway  
 Before you bracelets were never tight on fawns  
 Nor had I heard of damask on the covert  
 If the misfortunes of fate strike me from near by  
 They strike a man not coward or weakling  
 He who envies your sons O Ubaid Allah ransoms them  
 Horse's hoof is ransomed by wild ass' forehead  
 O father of the chiefs who guard their neighbors  
 And leave lions like dogs without their prey  
 He has the whitest of foreheads and the turban      10  
 Seems to cover the light on a live coal  
 Near and far, beloved and hated and joyous  
 Elegant with sweet, bitter, soft and hard  
 Generous, aloof, eager, faithful, brother of trust  
 Sharp, noble, wise, quick, content and witty  
 If the bounty of his hands were morning showers  
 Rare the dry place for sand grouse in a desert  
 Most noble of men, heaven envied earth for them  
 And every city has fallen short of Tripoli  
 What kings shall I be wary of if they are my goal      15  
 What heroes if they are my sword and shield?

41 He spoke also in his youth to his friend when he intended to travel. (92)

I loved giving to you when you intended a journey  
 And I found the greatest I had was small  
 And I knew you were desirous of noble acts  
 In love with them morning and evening

So I have made what was given to me a gift  
 From me to you and its cover is expectation  
 Goodness finds its acceptance easy to your hands  
 And its bearing was difficult for me.

42 He spoke praising Muhammad ibn Zuraiq of Tarsus. (93)

O you who appeared to us so as to move us deeply  
 Then turned away and did not heal the dying  
 You made my joy in you a happiness in sleep  
 And left me sitting under the two Farqads  
 You cut off the bit of drunkenness in anguish  
 And passed around the wine of parting's cup  
 If you are among those departing then my tears  
 Satisfy your water bag and the camel's thirst  
 Beware lest such as you should become a miser      5  
 And with such a face as yours lest it frown  
 With an embrace like yours lest it be untouchable  
 And such a grace as yours lest it be ugly  
 A woman who excited between me and my censurers  
 A war and who left the heart a furnace  
 Pure, her coquetry protects her lest one make talk  
 Proud, shame protects her from swerving  
 When I found the cure of my sickness with her  
 The prescription of a Galen was easy for me  
 Zuraiq remains on the borders as one praised      10  
 Precious he remains for precious souls  
 If he rest his treasurer parts with his wealth  
 If he sallies bodies part with their heads  
 A king who when you hate yourself you hate him  
 And you prefer desolation while you hate men  
 One who plunges into the depths without defense  
 Expeditious when the spears are thrusting  
 I examined all creatures but I never found  
 Any subjects beside him as leader  
 A man who depicts the heights of miracle      15  
 He baffles thought and corrupts comparison  
 There is stinginess in him for humanity, not with it  
 Due to it he is sad for them, not because of them  
 If Dhu'l Qarnain had made use of his wisdom  
 When he got to the dark, suns would have come  
 And if his sword had struck off Lazarus' head  
 In a day's battle Jesus had been helpless  
 And if the waves of the sea were his right hand  
 They would not split when Moses crossed them  
 Or if sun and moon had the light of his forehead      20  
 They'd be worshipped and the world be Magian  
 When I heard of him I heard only of one alone  
 And when I saw him I saw a battalion of him  
 I looked at his fingers and they flowed with gifts  
 I touched his sword and souls ran from it

O him! in his shade we take refuge from time  
 In eternity, and by his name we drive off Iblis  
 Fame is true to you, its descriptions short of you  
 One who is in Iraq sees you at Tarsus  
 You stay in a city; thought of you is everywhere 25  
 It dislikes a siesta and hates a late sleep  
 And when you seek your prey you depart from it  
 And when you withdraw you take it as your lair  
 I scatter pearls upon you so take them for real  
 The tricksters are many; beware of a fraud  
 I kept them veiled from the people of Antioch  
 I show them to you for you shine as bridegroom  
 The best of birds are in palaces and the worst  
 Take refuge in ruins and roost in the tombs  
 If the world is generous it ransoms you by its men 30  
 If it wars it conscripts hermits for you.

## 43 And he spoke also about him. (98)

Muhammad ibn Zuraiq we know of no one who  
 If we lost you would give before he reckoned  
 I sought you out and the journey was short  
 But the house was far and provision used up  
 So keep your hand from flow and divert its shower  
 When I am satisfied or else the land drowns.

44 He spoke praising Ubaid Allah ibn Yahya al Buhturi.  
 (99)

I wept O campsite until almost I made you weep  
 And I, and my tears, pined away in your camp  
 Be gracious this morning for you stirred my grief  
 And return our greeting as we greeted you  
 By what judgment of time can you be taken for  
 A desert fawn instead of maid of your clan  
 Some days the suns do not appear with you for us  
 Except they draw blood, a glance's shedding  
 And life is green and ruins of the camp gleam 5  
 As if the light of Ubaid Allah were over you  
 Man is saved O Ibn Yahya when you are his desire  
 Riders of camels betrayed, not turning to you  
 You inspire the poets to poetry and they praise  
 All those they praise by that which is in you  
 And they teach men glory by you and gain power  
 Over the finest meanings from your meaning  
 So be as you wish O you who have no comparison  
 Or how you wish for no creature approaches you  
 The thanks of petitioners to whom you give show me  
 The way to your bounty by a well-trodden path 10

The majesty of your power is above my imagination  
 By the little I praise you I seem to mock you  
 It is enough that you are of Qahtan in eminence  
 And if you boast then all are your clients  
 If I fall short in ratio as you exceed in bounty  
 To men, they would see me as your enemy  
 Present to your bounty; it calls and makes me hear  
 Your ransom among men, my friends; I ransom you  
 You still follow the last gift with another 15  
 Until I think my life is among your gifts  
 If you say: Here. It's a custom you are known by  
 Or if: No--but your mouth never gives a No.

45 And he spoke praising Ubaid Allah Yahya al Buhturi.  
 (101)

Is it your saliva or water from a cloud or wine?  
 In my mouth it is cool and in my liver coals  
 Is it a branch or a sandhill or are you a maiden  
 And what I kissed lightning or teeth?  
 My censurers saw the face of one I love at night  
 They said: We see a sun but dawn has not risen.  
 They see what there is of magic in her glance  
 Swords whose edges are ever red with my blood  
 Calm beauty attains the utmost in her movements 5  
 No excuse for not dying at sight of her face  
 To you Ibn Yahya ibn al Walid the camel crosses  
 A desert with me; her flesh and blood poetry  
 With thoughts of you I sprinkle her burning heart  
 She goes earth's length, a handspan in her eyes  
 To the lion of war whose sword is fed with lions  
 To bounty's sea in whose wave seas drown  
 If his generosity leaves any of his inheritance  
 It is like what the flight leaves of the lover  
 Young man, every day he gathers souls as his wealth 10  
 His lance is honor, not the dark one of Rudaina  
 The difference between him and a cloud is great  
 But his gifts are rain and his favors a sea  
 If the world submitted to judgment of his hand  
 The world would find its greatness small  
 The majesty of his power shows its power little  
 But his power is not power for the terrific  
 When he points with his face toward the heavens  
 The stars fall and the moon is eclipsed  
 You see him as the earthly moon and king who has  
 Dominion after Allah and glory and esteem 15  
 Much wakefulness of eye without any cause  
 Keeps him awake with thought that ennobles him  
 His is a generosity that destroys praise as if  
 Thanks swore he could not be repaid for it  
 Abu Ahmad, there is no honor except for his clan  
 Nor boasting in affairs not touching Buhturi

They are men but they belong to noble actions  
 Cities enriched and travelers guided by them  
 By whom do I make proverbs or whom compare to you 20  
 When men of the age and the age are short of you?

46 And he spoke praising his brother Abu Ubada Ubaid  
 Allah Yahya al Buhturi. (104)

Passion will not be content with me in this grief  
 Until I am without a heart and liver  
 Nor will these campsites where the beloved was  
 Complain to me nor do I complain to anyone  
 But all the rumbling showers still wear them down  
 And illness thins me until my body tells of it  
 Each time my tears flow my patience wanes  
 As if some of my strength ran from my eyelids  
 Where are the sighs which I loaded him with 5  
 Where, Ibn Yahya, is the lion's attack from you?  
 When I weigh the world with you, you outweigh it  
 And large numbers of men seem few to me  
 Joy never settled in my soul even for a day  
 O Abu Ubada until you settled in my thoughts  
 A king who when his treasury is full of wealth  
 Makes it taste food of a child bereft mother  
 An alert mind, troubles are known before tomorrow  
 In his heart as his eyes see them afterward  
 This splendor and this light is not of mankind 10  
 Nor is the lenity in it lenity of a hand  
 What a hand that rivals showers in two seasons  
 When they depart one returns and the other not  
 I had been thinking that glory came from Mudhar  
 Until al Buhturi, so now it is of Udad  
 They are people who when their swords rain death  
 You think a cloud is generous to the land  
 I cannot make an end of my ideas of your traits  
 Rather I find their end a goal of eternity.

47 He spoke praising Musawar ibn Muhammad al Rumi. (107)

Terrible as it is for me it may yet be worse  
 Is wormwood the food of this singing fawn?  
 Drunkenness plays with its walk and leaves it  
 A statue among statues except for breath  
 It pays no mind; I look at it and its cheeks  
 Are blushing but my heart is wounded  
 It shoots but its hands do not aim; what hits me  
 Is an arrow that still hurts--arrows stop  
 The visit nears but there is no visit and yet 5  
 The heart is early so let us meet and rest

Our secret is disclosed to you and our veiling  
 Is thin so the declaration is plain to you  
 When the camels start away then my soul is broken  
 With grief for they are like palm trees  
 And parting reveals the beauties of the beloved  
 Beauty of patience is ugly once she is gone  
 A hand waving goodbye and a glance lifted up  
 A heart that melts and tears that spread  
 The dove grieves and if it were like my grieving 10  
 The arak tree would aid the dove's lament  
 If a north wind traversed that length with a rider  
 On its back it would kneel exhausted  
 I agonized with a camel's stirrup whose convoy  
 For fear of death sang the "Glory to Allah"  
 If it were not for the Emir Musawar ibn Muhammad  
 It would not tempt danger or reject advice  
 And if she weakens with Abu Muzaffer as her goal  
 Befitting her and me is death as our lot  
 We see his lightning but the sky is not cloudy 15  
 Freely he gives but winds do not milk him  
 Hope for something profitable, fear of some evil  
 Makes evening cup of thanks and morning cup  
 Raging against purses of silver which bring no  
 Consolation and forgiveness to wrongdoers  
 If he shared the generosity of his usable wealth  
 With men there would be no greed in the age  
 His ears disregard the blame and tolerate  
 The hole in the nose of a censurer  
 He is one who when the age is forgot his memory 20  
 And story are explained in their books  
 Our hearts are overcome by his handsomeness  
 Our clouds are disgraced by his favors  
 He overwhelms jousting and brings back no spears  
 Splintered to bits though the armor is whole  
 That saffron on this dirt is from the blood  
 The hair cloth on the sky is dust of battle  
 He steps from corpse to corpse in front of him  
 Lord of horses, behind him the prostrate  
 The profound love of his beloved has joy in him 25  
 The hidden hate of his enemies is an ulcer  
 One veils enmity but it cannot be concealed  
 The glance of the enemy reveals what is secret  
 O son of him whom no cloak covers like his son's  
 Eminence, or tomb holds like that well-being  
 We ransom you for bounty when gifts are asked  
 For terror when blood and sweat are mingled  
 If you were a sea there would be no shore to you  
 If you are a cloud wind is too weak for you  
 I fear for the land and its people due to you 30  
 Since there is no Noah to warn Noah's folk  
 It is weak in a free man to be poor if before him  
 Is provision of Allah and your door open  
 Verses complain of my intention to take refuge  
 With another than you as object of praise

The sweet perfumes of the gardens are their words  
 Needing rain they seek to praise and spread  
 The strength is small but what of beauty's son?  
 When you do good to him the tongue is eloquent.

48 He spoke also praising Masawar ibn al Rumi. (113)

Is this Masawar or is this the arc of the sun  
 Or a lion of the wood who precedes the wazir?  
 Sheathe what you unsheathed for you left its edge  
 Broken and it left the people uprooted  
 Consider! you smashed Yazdath's son and his allies  
 Don't you see all men are as the Banu Yazdath?  
 You left their faces, wherever you met them,  
 In pieces as their necks and their livers  
 In the battle death stood in the front against them 5  
 In his narrows, and he gained the mastery  
 Their souls turned to stone when you approached  
 You poured it out and gave to drink with steel  
 When they saw you they saw your father Muhammad  
 In armor and the brother of your father Mu'adh  
 Striking off their heads you urged their tongues  
 To say: There is no horseman except this one.  
 Heedless, you rise upon them like a cloud  
 Raining death in storms and small drops  
 If there is a prisoner you stain his clothes 10  
 With blood and wet his thighs with urine  
 Against him the Mashrafi swords bar his roads  
 He cannot turn to Aleppo nor to Bagdad  
 He sought the command of the border but his origin  
 Was somewhere between Karchia and Kalwadha  
 It's as if he thought spear points something sweet  
 Or thought them dates of Bernia or Izadh  
 Before you one did not find when lances varied  
 Any who made jousting refuge from jousting  
 One for whom life and its sweet is not a success 15  
 Until his penetrating will succeeds  
 Accustomed to wearing armor he thinks that it is  
 In the cold, silk and in noon heat, cotton  
 Wonderful your taking him but how much more  
 Wonderful if there had been no taking!

49 He spoke mourning the death of Muhammad ibn Ishaq  
 al Tanukhi. (116)

As for me, I know and my heart perceives  
 That life even if you covet it is a delusion  
 And I see that everyone is comforting himself  
 With some excuse but moves toward nothing

Is not the vicinity of the tomb a pledge of rest  
 In which rays and light are from his face?  
 I had not thought before your burial in the earth  
 That the stars would penetrate this dust  
 I had not hoped before your bier I could see  
 Radwa being borne by the hands of men  
 They went with him and for each mourner behind him  
 It was the cry of Moses the day Sinai shook  
 And the sun in the center of the sky was sick  
 The earth was disturbed and quaked almost  
 There was rustle of angel's wings about him  
 And the eyes of the people of Latakia turned  
 When they came to the tomb it was as if its door  
 Was cut in the hearts of each individual  
 Provided from his wealth with a shroud that decays 10  
 Asleep and the camphor as kohl for the eyes  
 In him was eloquence and generosity and piety  
 And bravery complete and reason and goodness  
 Praise was guaranteed him at the end of his life  
 When he was buried and as it were resurrected  
 It is as if Jesus ibn Mariam was a memory of him  
 And as if Lazarus had his shape in the tomb.

The sons of the uncle of the dead man asked for more  
and he spoke impromptu. (118)

His fingers dried up and yet they were seas  
 His wile quenched and they were flames  
 He was wept for but his rest was not quiet 15  
 In the tomb until the houris greeted him  
 The Banu Ishaq were generous is patience for him  
 For great ones are patients in great matters  
 To every distress but yours there is comparison  
 For every loss except his there is an equal  
 One day the sword's hilt was in his right hand  
 The handclasp of death was too short for him  
 Long did they bathe with the red liquor  
 Skulls and breast bones at his sword edges  
 I make free his brothers, by the lord Muhammad 20  
 Lest they grieve, for Muhammad is happy  
 Or lest they prefer their palaces to the tomb  
 Where Munkar and Nakir wish him well  
 People, when the scabbard is free of their swords  
 Then the last day of the enemy is at hand  
 When they meet an army it is certain that it  
 Is resurrected from bellies of desert birds  
 Bridles of their horses are not turned in pursuit  
 Rather the lives of those pursued are cut off  
 I sought their distant home as the goal because 25  
 The beloved is visited from afar by slaves  
 I was satisfied with the meeting and first glance  
 For a little bit of the beloved is much.

The sons of the uncle of the dead man asked him to reply to reproaches made against them and he spoke impromptu. (119)

Is there for Ibrahim's people after Muhammad  
Anything but eternal longing and sighs?  
A wise man in their affairs has no doubt that  
After him comfort for them is forbidden  
The tears make their cheeks bloody; the watches  
Of thir nights pass and they are ages  
O sons of the uncle every sin in this matter is 30  
Pardonable but not slander against them  
The gossips dart on the purity of their love  
Like flies that are hovering over the food  
I was lavish toward Abu Husain in love and this  
My bounty to his enemies was squandering  
A king who attained what he wanted as if  
Eternal decree came by decisions of judgment.

50 And he spoke also refuting the slander against them. (121)

For what changes of destiny do we criticize them  
For which of his griefs do we seek revenge?  
Gone is one we lost with our patience at his loss  
For he gave courage but patience is far away  
He raided the enemy with dust clouds in the sky  
His spearheads on their flanks were the stars  
They flee from him and it is as if the swords  
Whose edges become dull are the beaten ones  
They rose like suns and scabbards were the east 5  
For them, while skulls of men were the west  
The scattering attacks are united as calamity  
He does not stop until other attacks follow  
Those unrelated to him mourn our father's brother  
We were distant and yet the nearest relatives  
It is plain that the gossips wanted his death  
If not may the swords visit his sideburns  
Is it not wonderful that among a father's sons  
A child of the Jews should creep as scorpion?  
O indeed was not the passing of Muhammad 10  
A proof that he could not overcome Allah?

51 He spoke praising Husain ibn Ishaq al Tanukhi. (122)

This is parting when the party of men won't delay  
When, O heart, you are among those who depart  
We arose and what increased grief was our standing  
As two parts of love: each beloved and lover

The eyelids have already become red with weeping  
 And the roses became yellow on the cheeks  
 Because of this men perished, united and parted  
 The dead and newborn, the hated and loved  
 My condition changed and my nights in their way 5  
 I grew gray but youthful time does not age  
 Ask deserts: What are jinn to us in their midst  
 And one with Mahris where the male ostrich is?  
 On many a dark night the desert seemed to reveal  
 To us your face and there it was our guide  
 Its dusk has no end but for a light in your face  
 Nor would riding beasts go, except a camel  
 The jogging put sleep to flight until it seemed  
 I was drunk in the stirrups, a worn-out cloak  
 They chant of Ibn Ishaq al Husain and the saddle 10  
 And its pillow shake hands with their necks  
 Of one who when he walks the earth its hair stands  
 And the towering mountains are made to quake  
 A youth, a dark cloud he is feared and hoped for  
 Its rain is hoped for and his thunder feared  
 But yet these pass while he is true of character  
 They betray our hopes but he is ever faithful  
 You are aloof from worldly society, but not absent  
 From the thought of him are its west and east  
 He feeds his Indian swords with heads and necks 15  
 These are their combs and these the collars  
 Because of them garments are rent when he is at war  
 And by them the beards and the hair are dyed  
 He whose death is unheeded by him is far from them  
 But he suffers them whose soul is divorced from him  
 One reasons by him: Who speaks if he is silent?  
 He is mute but his sword speaks for his mouth  
 I did not know you when my wonder lasted long  
 But no wonder in beauty that Allah creates  
 It was as if in giving you were a hater of wealth 20  
 And in every battle you were a lover of death  
 O short is the time they stay due to their fate  
 The lance and war horse that are used by you  
 May Allah hide and veil this beauty with a veil  
 If you shine maidens melt in their tents  
 The dark will be shamed by you while the stars gleam  
 Caravans guided by you as long as dawn glows  
 Destiny does not support those whom you forbid  
 Nor do the fates forbid those whom you support  
 The days do not break apart what you have joined 25  
 Nor do the days join what you have broken  
 The best, I cannot seek any wealth other than yours  
 Nor stay elsewhere than here in Latakia  
 This is the farthest goal and your face is reward  
 Your house the world and you all its people.

him, though someone else had done it. So he reproached Muhammad ibn Ishaq and spoke. (127)

Do you not recognize me as a brother O Ibn Ishaq  
 And do you think others' water is from my jar?  
 Would I speak ridicule of you after my knowledge  
 That you were the best of those under heaven?  
 And the most bitter tasting of the sword's edges  
 And the sharpest in matters of law courts?  
 My years have not reached more than twenty years  
 So why should I be bored with this long life?  
 Why would I drown your description in my praise 5  
 And then scant any bit of it by a mockery?  
 But grant, I said, that this dawn is a night  
 Are the people who know blinded from the light?  
 You subdued the jealous and you are a man  
 For whom I am ransom and they are my ransom  
 My own satire is for those who do not distinguish  
 Between my word and that of the worthless  
 Indeed it is surprising that you have seen me  
 And equated me with the smallest dust specks  
 I am ignorant of their death and I am Suhail 10  
 I bring the death of these sons of harlots.

53 He spoke also praising Husain ibn Ishaq al Tanukhi.  
 (128)

The blame of distance in its evil is extreme evil  
 Perhaps it has some of the sickness I have  
 If not jealous it would not prevent meeting you  
 If not desirous it would not be my rival  
 Will the fawn be gracious enough to return who  
 Made a gift of a first shower without a second?  
 I sucked her lips at dawn and it was as if  
 I sucked warmth of love from cool saliva  
 A girl whose necklace is like her speech and 5  
 Whose smile is pearly in beauty and harmony  
 The smell of her breath and incense and Qarqafa  
 Of aged vintage both in aroma and in taste  
 Rude to me as if I wasn't most eloquent in her clan  
 And bravest with a grey horse who seems black  
 My death is cautious as if I were its death  
 When a serpent stung me my poison killed it  
 Length of the Rudaini, my blood is what breaks it  
 Brightness of the Suraiji, my flesh cuts it  
 A night journey trims me thin as a knife so that 10  
 My body wavers lighter than my breath on a horse  
 More sharp sighted than Zarqa of Jawa since  
 When my eyes look my knowledge equals them  
 As if I covered the earth with my knowledge of it  
 As if Alexander built the wall with my resolve

To meet Ibn Ishaq whose understanding is keen  
 It amazes as it glows with fineness of wit  
 Listen to his words which are a speech that  
 Charms my ears even if it includes my blame  
 The right hand of the Banu Qahtan is Qudha's head 15  
 Their nose the moon of Banu Fahm's stars  
 When you meet the enemy at night their hearing  
 Has the spears' whistle before bridles' jingle  
 Conqueror of the strong, comforter even if he comes  
 To orphan them; bereaver, a helper of orphaned  
 If his spear brings sickness to hearts yet those  
 Who are touched have healing from poverty by him  
 Girded with despotic double edges he judges  
 The skulls, except that it is unfair judgment  
 He has had enough of the sparing of blood as if he 20  
 Saw his own death in leaving heads on bodies  
 We found ibn Ishaq al Husain like his grandfather  
 In the number of his battles free from sin  
 And in resolution until he intends to abandon it  
 Then his leaving it makes resolve stick firmly  
 And so in war if he were to desire a retreat  
 His retreat has the noble nature of progress  
 His is mercy that brings bones to life, and anger  
 That has surplus for sin rather than sinner  
 He has a kindly face if you imprint a glance 25  
 On his cheeks a trace of the print is not lost  
 His beauty attracts maidens who do not relish me  
 But he is chaste and repays their shunning me  
 Ransom are those in the dust, first of whom am I  
 For this noble one of glory, excellent prince  
 His sword intervened between jinn and believers  
 So no danger from Arabs or Persians after jinn  
 He scares them if they but look at his armor  
 They melt in fear without fire or coal  
 Bounteous! if his bounty were not a non-drinker's 30  
 One would say: Noble! The vine's daughter gives it  
 We obey you in eternal fealty, O son of ibn Yusuf,  
 With our desires in spite of the jealous ones  
 We trust in what you give and if you do not give  
 We think by force of habit you have given  
 I was acclaiming your praise in every assembly  
 One thought he named my praise of you as my name  
 You tempted me with gifts I had not yet received  
 The like of before, until I desired the stars  
 Whenever you conquer a warrior you share with me 35  
 Measure the gold for me once by his wound  
 Yemeni magnanimity drives off my blame from you  
 You yourself attack by it forever in battle  
 How many talkers if they owned such a person  
 Would make its mask covering for a huge army?  
 Many a thought is revolved by the earth in wonder  
 Of me as a man who walks with my weight of mind

You are great when one does not address you in fear  
 You are humble, a greatness bigger than pride.

54 He entered the house of Ali ibn Ibrahim al Tanukhi  
 and he offered him a cup in which was a dark drink.  
 So he spoke impromptu. (135)

Whenever the cup makes the hands tremble  
 I sober up so it is not twixt me and myself  
 I flee the wine that is like refined gold  
 My wine is water of the clouds like silver  
 I am jealous of the glass which flows  
 Over the lips of the Emir Abu Husain  
 As if its brightness and the wine in it  
 Were whiteness of eye around a dark pupil  
 We came to him seeking liberality  
 Then he sought the same as payment for it.

55 So he drank it and then said about it. (136)

The pure wine wishes health to you Ibn Ibrahim  
 Enjoy it as a drinker among drunken topers  
 I saw the nectar in the glass in his hand  
 I compared it to the sun in the moon in the sea  
 Whenever we think of his bounty it is present  
 Far or near it runs on the feet of al Khidr.

56 And he spoke also praising Ali ibn Husain al Tanukhi.  
 (137)

Is it a single one or is it six of them in one  
 Our little night suspended till the trump?  
 As if the daughters of rising in their darkness  
 Were virgins unveiled in mourning dress  
 I keep thinking about the perseverance of fate  
 And the reins of the horse high on the neck  
 My will is a guarantee to the Khatti lances  
 For shedding blood of city and desert  
 How long this falling behind and falling short  
 For how long this stretching out of the goal?  
 Occupying the self in the search for the heights  
 In selling verses in a stagnant market  
 And the passing of youth cannot be recovered  
 Nor the day that is gone be brought back  
 Whenever the eyes see the white hair of age  
 They find it in their pupils as blindness  
 When I go on living after my extreme limit  
 Then my decline coincides with my increase

Shall I be content that I live and am unsatisfied  
With what there is of favor with the Emir?  
May Allah reward the journey to him with good  
Even if a camel is left like empty water bag  
My hardened camel will not meet Ibn Ibrahim  
With blood in her to feed a tick for a day  
Was there not between us a distant waste land  
Whose length became the width of a sword belt?  
It made far our distance by a space of closeness  
Brought near our closeness as near as removal  
And so when I came to him he raised my position  
He seated me above the seven heavens  
He rejoices before my greeting is made to him  
He gives of his wealth before the pillow is set  
0 Ali we can never blame you for any sin  
Except as you detract from all creatures  
And as for you your gifts are offered as  
Generosity lest some should call them bounty  
As if your liberality were Islam making you fear  
Punishment of renegades if you should change  
It is as if the skulls in the battle were eyes  
And your swords sealed them with sleep  
You have inclined the spear heads of desire  
They vibrate nowhere except in the heart  
On that day you guided the dusty maned ones  
With their tails knotted up for the pursuit  
And destruction circles with them over men  
Among whom the wrongdoers of Ad at Latakia  
And so on the west there was its sea of water  
And on the east was the sea of horses  
And in it the banners fluttered for you  
And perpetually foamed with swords of steel  
They met you with the stubborn livers of camels  
You drove them and edge of sword was driver  
And you tore the garment of rebellion from them  
And dressed them with the garment of guidance  
But they did not leave the command by choice  
Nor did they profess your love out of love  
They did not submit to discipline of the Exalted  
Nor were they led joyfully by leadership  
But yet your fear blew in their breasts  
The blowing of a wind in the legs of locusts  
They died before the time of their death and when  
You favored them they returned before Judgment  
You make sheaths for swords if they do not repent  
You erase them with them as one erases ink  
But this recent rage even if it is strong cannot  
Be equal to an inherited generosity  
Do not let the tongues of counselors deceive you  
Their hateful hearts make them fickle  
So be like death do not pity the weeper  
He weeps due to it and waters and is thirsty  
For the wound will swell after that time  
When the scab has grown over the sore

And the water will flow from the rock  
 And the fire will come out of the flint  
 And how should the coward spend the night in bed  
 When you spread around it tragacanth thorns?  
 He sees in his sleep your spears in his food  
 And he fears that he will see it at waking  
 I was happy O Abu Husain while praising people 40  
 I settled with them but left without reward  
 Once they thought that I was praising them  
 But you were my meaning when I praised them  
 As for me after tomorrow I am gone from you  
 Yet my heart will not depart from your courts  
 Your lover wherever my steed turns itself  
 And your guest wherever I am in any land.

57 He spoke also praising Ali Ibrahim al Tanukhi. (143)

O long lasting rain make thirsty these quarters  
 Or else pour on them liquid poison  
 I inquire about its wandering inhabitants  
 But it doesn't know and won't shed tears  
 May Allah curse it except for its past times  
 Of pleasure and the playful girl  
 Most gracious and inaccessible with heavy hips  
 Her words would attract the birds to stop  
 Her buttocks let her dress fall free from her 5  
 And keep space between her double necklaces  
 When she sways you watch the movement of it  
 If it were not for her arms it would come off  
 The stitching hurts her but the stitching is soft  
 Compared to the hurt of a sharpened sword  
 Her arms are enemies to her bracelets  
 Her bedmate thinks her forearm is his bedmate  
 It is as if her veil were a thin cloud  
 That shades the rising moon as it glows  
 I say to her: Show me my distress. And my words 10  
 Are more humble than her coquetry  
 Do you fear Allah in resurrecting a soul?  
 When does Allah rebel at anyone's submitting?  
 Every abandoned, mad lover has come to you  
 And every shameless veiled one has appeared  
 I will love you till they say ants have dragged  
 Thubair or till Ibn Ibrahim is afraid  
 Far famed are the sorties of the cavalry  
 His memory makes the sucking child grow gray  
 He casts down his eyes in artifice and cunning 15  
 As if he was and yet was not submissive  
 When you ask him to give you what is in his hand  
 It is enough to ask a secret for it to be told  
 Your acceptance of his gift is a gift to him  
 If it does not occur he sees it as rejection

In scorn of wealth he spreads the leather carpet  
 And at the dividing he hates to put it by  
 When the Emir strikes off the heads of people  
 He spreads a carpet but not for bounty  
 For he gives no gifts except when they are many 20  
 Nor does he execute any but the noble  
 He does not teach except with the sword edge  
 The sword is enough for the work of the whip  
 Ali is the one who does not forbid any antagonist  
 To show himself; he only forbids him return  
 Ali who kills the champion, the ransomed one  
 Exchanging his corselet for one of blood  
 Then he bends the lance against its bearers  
 And it fastens one rib to their other ribs  
 And the liver makes its retaliation on it 25  
 For it is there that it bursts or splits  
 So avoid him in the meeting of the two horsemen  
 Unless you are the fiercest of panthers  
 If you venture to gaze at him from afar  
 You are able to do something which no one can  
 And if you disbelieve me then get on a horse and  
 Imagine him; you will fall dead before him  
 He is a cloud, often he rains vengeance  
 So his shower makes sterile fertile land  
 He saw me after the camel was exhausted 30  
 Going to him with saddle straps worn through  
 His river flowed over my land to make a pool  
 His goodness made my year all spring  
 He endowed me with what he gave and what I took  
 His gifts drowned my grasp with swiftness  
 Shall I not forget Sukun and Hadhramaut  
 And my mother and Kinda and Sabih  
 You have gone the limit in plunder of the enemy  
 So return them their sleep from the plunder  
 Whenever you do not send any army against them 35  
 You take captive their hearts with fear  
 They consent to you as one consents to gray hair  
 Compelled to the white forelock and tresses  
 Not unarmed even when you are without weapons  
 Your glance has something in it which forbids  
 Or if you put in place of the sword your mind  
 You cut with breastplate and chain mail  
 If you have exhausted your efforts in battle yet  
 You can overcome all the world with them  
 You rose by ambition so rise and continue to rise 40  
 For you do not find content in any degree  
 Grant you are generous until none is generous  
 Yet how do you rise until there is no height?

58 And he spoke also praising Ali ibn Ibrahim al Tanukhi.  
(148)

Aims: the first traces to be erased by your tears  
 The past the most recent thing from their time  
 Yet the people must stay with their kings  
 Arabs are not lucky whose kings are foreigners  
 There is no culture among them and no respect  
 No covenants for them and no loyalties  
 In every land that you have trod the people  
 Are ruled by slaves as if they were sheep  
 One thinks the silk rough when he wears it 5  
 But the rush was worn out by his toenail  
 As for me, even when I blamed those who envied me  
 I did not deny what a plague I was to them  
 Why should not a man like a high peak be envied  
 Who has advanced over the heads of all  
 The more polite sort of men fear him for this  
 And heroes dread the edge of his sword  
 For I am a man who has had enough of blame  
 The noblest possession I own is generosity  
 Wealth harms the avaricious if only they knew 10  
 As poverty can never harm them  
 They belong to their wealth and not it to them  
 And the shame remains while wounds heal  
 Whoever is seeking glory let him be like Ali  
 He gives a thousand while he is smiling  
 He jousts the horsemen and each stroke pierces  
 There is no pain in them since they are swift  
 He is acquainted with an event before it occurs  
 Nor does he have a regret after it happens  
 Command and denial, long-tailed horses and swords 15  
 They are his as well as slaves and partisans  
 And those attacks which you have heard about  
 Almost the mountains are broken by them  
 He respects what you say as listener to plaintiff  
 And yet he is deaf to any foul language  
 He shows you in his character his rarities  
 How spirit is created with glory such as his  
 I went to one who, almost between the two of you  
 If you were suppliants, would divide himself 20  
 After the shaping of a gift from him there was  
 For one I loved: earrings and bracelets  
 No hand is so generous as what he lavishes  
 No mouth is guided to what he speaks  
 The tribe of the fierce Mahatta are lions  
 And their spears are made into the lair  
 A people for whom the maturity of the boys is  
 Thrusting at breasts of warriors, not puberty  
 It seems as if bounty is born with them  
 No little one is excused nor any old men  
 When they follow an enemy they make it known 25  
 When they do a good action they keep it hid  
 You would think from your losing count of them  
 That they do favors and do not know it  
 When they flash lightning then death is present  
 And when they reason it is correct and wise

Or swear a solemn oath and struggle with it  
 They say, as an oath: May my client fail!  
 Or if they ride on horseback without a saddle  
 Truly their thighs have determination  
 Or if they are present in fierce battle they take      30  
 Of the souls in armor what they think best  
 Their ideals and inclinations shine like the dawn  
 As if the nature of them were in their souls  
 Except for you I would not have left Buhaira  
 For Gaur is hot and its waters were cool  
 And the waves were like foaming horses  
 They rumble there with no reins on them  
 The birds above the trough of the waves seem to be  
 Piebald horses whose bridles have been broken  
 As if it, while the winds drive them about,      35  
 Were an army in battle pursuing and pursued  
 As if it in the daylight were a moon and  
 The darkness of gardens surrounding it  
 Soft is its body and there are no bones in it  
 It has daughters but it has no womb  
 Its belly gives forth with these continually  
 It does not complain and it does not bleed  
 Always the birds make music on its shores  
 The showers enrich the gardens about her  
 And so it is like a mirror encircled      40  
 The top of its cover has been laid bare  
 But its people in the towns disgrace it  
 Bastardy and vile origin are a disgrace  
 O Abu Husain, listen, because your praise  
 Is in acts before words are arranged in verse  
 The first showers are friendly to you in this  
 And the rains that impregnate are bounteous  
 I make you safe from vicissitudes of your time  
 For it is that which is ruinous to generosity.

## 59 And he spoke praising al Mughith Ali al Ajli. (154)

A tear flows and fulfills duty in this abode  
 To its people; but heal me and no grief?  
 Turn aside for parting dispatches what is left us  
 Of sanity and what is gone will not return  
 I water it with tears, one would think them rain  
 Their flow from the eyes one would think clouds  
 This camp of visits has a ghost that threatens me  
 Nightly, and my eyes neither believe nor deny  
 I move and it approaches, I come near and it goes      5  
 I warm and it rises, I kiss and it rejects  
 The heart longs for an Arab girl who dwells  
 In a heart's tent whose ropes she did not set  
 Crime against the waist to liken it to a sapling  
 Wrong done to saliva to compare it to honey

White, one longs for what is under her dress  
 But it is hard to attain when it is sought  
 As if she were the sun whose beam eludes the hand  
 Of a grasper though the eye sees it near  
 She passed by us with her maids and I said to her  
 Of what people is this young bedouin deer?  
 She smiled and then said: Like Mughith who seems  
 A lion of thickets but his ancestry is Ajli.  
 She brought bravest of those named, most generous  
 Of givers, finest of composers and writers  
 If his thought settles on the crippled they walk  
 On fools they know or the dumb they speak  
 When he appears, respect for him veils your eyes  
 But no curtain hides him when he draws a veil  
 The bright face makes the sun seem dark to you  
 A pearl in a word seems like an egg pearl  
 A sword of decision whose motion repels a sword  
 With dripping edge stained with heart's blood  
 The life of an enemy if he meets him in the dust  
 Is less than goods' life when he makes gifts  
 Watch out for him or if you wish to prove him  
 Become his enemy or some possession of his  
 His taste is sweet until, when he is angry,  
 It changes; if it drips in water do not drink  
 The earth covets the place where he settles  
 And horses are jealous of those he rides on  
 He rejects with his mouth no hand of a suppliant  
 From himself yet he refuses a loud army  
 And whenever two dinars meet as his friends  
 In his hand they part before they are friends  
 Wealth, it's as if a raven of parting watched it  
 It shrieks each time one says: He is a client.  
 A sea whose marvels are not told in evening talk  
 Nor marvels in the sea after these marvels  
 The gaining of a place does not satisfy Ibn Ali  
 If a seeker complains of effort or default  
 The Banu Ajli unfurl the banner for him and he is  
 Their chief and all become their followers  
 They are the ones who abandon the easy things  
 They are the ones who try what is difficult  
 The armor of their horses is swords that take  
 Skulls of warriors as bait for their spears  
 If the fates meet them they stand still  
 Fearfully desiring both advance and retreat  
 Theirs is rank which is high and thought follows  
 On its trail as it goes beyond the stars  
 The praise exhausts my verse trying to fill it  
 So it returns unfilled by it and not yet dry  
 Yours is nobility which surpasses the world  
 Who is able to attain a thing that is fleeting?  
 And when you stay in Antioch there are riders who  
 Come again and again with news to me in Aleppo  
 When I go to you I don't turn aside for anyone  
 I spur on my two camels: poverty and culture

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My time made me savor grief and I choked on it  
 If one tasted it he'd weep and howl lifelong  
 And if I should live I will make war my mother  
 My spear a brother and my sword a father  
 With each dishevelled one meeting death smiling  
 Until it's as if his dying were a need  
 Heedless, almost the whinny of a horse hurls him  
 From his saddle lively with joy or grief  
 Death is more excusable and courage is finer and  
 The land is wider, a world is his who conquers.

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60 He spoke praising al Muhghith ibn Ali ibn Bashhar al Ajli. (160)

This is a heart which wine cannot console  
 A life such as avarice makes a gift of  
 These are times whose men are small men  
 Even if their corpses are monstrous  
 But I, living among them, am not one of them  
 And yet the gold mines are in the earth  
 They are rabbits quite other than kings  
 With their eyes open they are asleep  
 With bodies that are where the battle rages  
 But the competition there is only the food  
 And horsemen before whom jousters don't fall  
 As if lances of horsemen were grass spears  
 Your friend is yourself, not one you call friend  
 Even if courtesies are many and the words  
 And if the government is held without reason  
 Yet the sword avoids the neck of a sharpener  
 The semblances of a thing are attracted to it  
 The likes of us in our world are stupid  
 If only he who has rank were able to rise  
 Warriors would rise and the dust would fall  
 And if only the meritorious were to rule  
 In their degree beasts would be shepherds  
 And he who experiences women finds that women  
 Have a brightness but inside they are dark  
 If youth seems drunkenness and the gray hairs  
 Only care, then life is death itself  
 Not everyone can be excused for miserliness  
 Nor is everyone blamed for stinginess  
 I do not see the like of my neighbors nor my like  
 In remaining with the likes of them  
 In a country where whatever you want you see it  
 There is nothing lacking except honor  
 Alas would that faults of the people were in it  
 Would that perfections were in them  
 There are two mountains here of honor and rock  
 The highest is Mughith, the other Lukam  
 But it is not his proper place but rather  
 He passes over it as the clouds pass

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May Allah grant that the brother of nobility pour 20  
     For me a drink, not weaning for his suckling  
 A person, one of whose benefits is giving  
     And one whose single gift is endless  
 The times have hidden him on our account  
     As a necklace hides the string of the pearls  
 Manliness delights him even when it injures one  
     And he who loves delights even in longing  
 He belongs to it with the love of Qais for Laila  
     And embraces it but no sickness is in him  
 He scares the grave ones and melts the sprightly 25  
     So one doesn't know--is he an elder or youth?  
 Problems possess him with respect to bounty  
     But he has no success in any argument  
 Acceptance of his gifts is honor and glory  
     But taking gifts of some people is blame  
 Many a gift of his stands out on the necks  
     They are the collar and men are the dove  
 When the generous are counted the sum is the Ajli  
     Like stars that rise and set to make a year  
 What is on their shoulders defends their foreheads 30  
     When the blows grow hot on the edges of it  
 And if you approach them on judgment day for gifts  
     They will give what they prayed and fasted for  
 Though they are clement, the horses among them  
     Are swift and their spears contentious  
 And with them the meat platters are crowned  
     And jousting right and left and double blows  
 We bring them down in blushes with our glances  
     But arrows are blunted by their faces  
 They are a tribe that bears the highest things 35  
     Like the bony structure bears the body  
 A tribe of which you are a part yet you are you  
     As your cheer is human, royal and heroic  
 Whose is this wealth which giving tears to pieces?  
     All creatures share in his huge bounty  
 We do not call you its lord and that pleases  
     For with lordship protection is a duty  
 It is stripped off as if you were a Samaritan  
     A hand with leprosy to be shaken hands with  
 Whenever the learned come to you they say: 40  
     Be ransom for us O instructed leader.  
 Whenever the flag bearers see you they say:  
     By this one the vast army is guided.  
 The season is made fine by you until it is  
     As if you are the smile on the mouth of time  
 You made a gift of that which creature never gave  
     The blessing of your lord on you and peace.

61 He spoke praising Abu Faraj Ahmad ibn al Husain al Qadi al Maliki. (166)

A jinn or a maiden on which the curtain is raised!  
 Or a wild deer, no, the deer has no earrings  
 She is shy, soldiers scared her since her neck  
     And beads, her waist and buttocks are heavy  
 Her silk dress makes us think of them as if  
     A sapling bent to us, a gazelle looked at us  
 Increase of white hair is loss of my excess  
     And the power of love weakens my strength  
 She who has the passion I have makes my blood flow      5  
     My passion and my love and hers are a bond  
 And who each time I strip her of her clothes  
     Draws to herself another dress of soft hair  
 The buds of the willow branch come near me  
     A moon bends over and a sandhill restrains it  
 Is it a trick on us O separation that you persist?  
     Our homes are not closer, our lives not clear  
 I'd repeat Alas if only Alas would end the need  
     I'd re-echo Too bad if Too bad healed thirst  
 The sickness of love is like poison hid in honey      10  
     I, unwitting, enjoyed it and joy was death  
 It strove and my soul could not avoid it until  
     Abu'l Faraj the Qadi became a shelter from it  
 Little sleep is his and if sword and spear were  
     His ideas no helmet or armor would hold  
 A frown on his face takes the place of an army  
     A letter of his word exceeds words  
 If he loses a bestowal his right hand yearns  
     For it, as friend who leaves longs for friend  
 Cultured peaks root in his breast's soil of wisdom      15  
     Earth's mountains are hills beside that  
 Liberal one, his hand aspires in good and evil  
     On high, so fate wishes its name were hand  
 He appears and among men every ruler  
     Of men finds disagreement except in his rule  
 They are his ransom until it is as if their blood  
     Waited in their veins for flow of his love  
 Waiting upon waiting in thanks and giving  
     His gifts a bequest and their thanks a bequest  
 When we lost the like of him our search was long      20  
     For him but loss stayed and search uncovered  
 Imagination is not more excited by the greatness  
     Of such as him than the eye is by his beauty  
 And rage and evil give no more out of envy of him  
     Than goodness will give out of his bounty  
 His thought is knowledge and his discourse wisdom  
     Within religion and without graciousness  
 He destroys winds of blame and they are storms  
     A high camp lost and bounty's traces erased  
 Before Ibn Husain we never saw such fingers that      25  
     As they shower put to shame thick rainclouds  
 Nor ever such a busy one achieving a peak of glory  
     With his acts that description cannot reach  
 Nor seen any bearing a heavy load as he bears it  
     He belittles the world yet a horse bears him

Never has the deep sea sat still for its clients  
 Beneath it a carpet and above it a roof  
 O wonder for me that I attempt his description  
 For writing and pages have withered before it  
 From a profusion of stories about his good deeds 30  
 One kind passes away and another kind comes  
 They smile with the qualities that are his like  
 Teeth of a beloved whose moisture never tires  
 I made you my goal and those who hoped it was them  
 Were many but a tail is not like the nose  
 Nor is bright silver and refined gold the same  
 In their use to the poor but both can be spent  
 You are not small, a shower fears its smallness,  
 Nor an end of bounty beyond which is another  
 You are not just one among the men of society  
 Nor some among all but rather double them 35  
 Nor yet double when the double follows its double  
 Nor twice twice double, nor like a thousand  
 O our Qadi this is the family of which you are--  
 I make a mistake, this is not a third or a half  
 My sin is my remissness but I did not bring praise  
 As my sin, rather I come to ask forgiveness.

## 62 He spoke praising Ali ibn Mansur the Hajib. (172)

By my father! the suns are declining to the west  
 The ones who are wearing their silken veils  
 Those who plundered our hearts and our reasons  
 With their cheeks that sack the plunderers  
 The soft ones, the killers, bringers back to life  
 Who make appear the signs of coquetry  
 They try to say farewell but they fear the guard  
 So they put their hands above their breasts  
 They smiled with cool teeth that I feared to melt 5  
 With the heat of my sighs for I was melting  
 O well for those who saddle up and well for the  
 Valleys where I veiled myself from a virgin sun  
 What hope is there to be free of these calamities  
 After they have fixed their claws in me?  
 They have isolated me and united with a grief  
 Extreme, for they have made it master of me  
 They have set me up as target for arrows to hit  
 Suffering sharper than the edges of swords  
 The world made me thirsty when I came to it 10  
 Seeking drink, and she poured her trouble on me  
 I got in place of a hollow-eyed dark-hoof camel  
 Sheepskins, so I started as a goer on foot  
 Such a state that if Ibn Mansur knew of it  
 Time would come to me repentant due to it  
 A king whose lance head and whose fingers  
 One rivals in blood and bounty's flow

He thinks great matters small for his retainers  
 And thinks the Dijla is not enough to drink  
 He is noble and if you told him about himself  
 And great things done he would think you lie  
 Ask about his bravery and visit him in peace  
 But beware and beware again of him in war  
 For death is known by description of his nature  
 He makes no creature taste death twice  
 If you meet him you will meet him only in an army  
 Or in the dust or in jousting or slashing  
 Or in fleeing or in pursuing or in desiring  
 Or in dreading or in agonizing or lamenting  
 And when you look at the mountains you see them  
 Above the plain as spears and swords  
 And when you look at the plains you see them  
 Below mountains as horsemen and squires  
 And the steel stands out in the darkening dust  
 Like negro smiling or gray locks of hair  
 Whenever day is dressed with it there is dark  
 Of night, and the lances bring up the stars  
 Misfortunes make an army with it as an army  
 And men form battalions with it as conscripts  
 He leads away a lion whose prey is lions  
 He is a lion for whom the lions are foxes  
 As for rank, men are kept from attaining it  
 He is eminent so they call him Ali the keeper  
 They call him from excess of generosity the lavish  
 They call him from conquest of souls conqueror  
 He is the one who expends gold in making gifts  
 His enemies are dead and fate put to the test  
 He disappoints the critics in what they hoped  
 From him but he denies no hand with refusal  
 That which you see of him when he is present  
 Is like that which you see of him when absent  
 Like the moon wherever you turn you see it  
 He guides to your eyes a piercing beam  
 Like the sea he throws up jewels for those nearby  
 As bounty, and sends the distant clouds  
 Like the sun at its zenith in heaven and its light  
 Overwhelming the land in the east and west  
 O you make their bounty base born and despised  
 And leave all the liberal people with censure  
 They show their virtues and you show your honor  
 Their virtue is found disgraceful by that  
 I am here for you O permanent rage of the envious  
 Truly we witness wonders from your bounty  
 Order owning experience thinks of the morrow  
 But onslaughts of fools do not fear outcomes  
 As for a rich gift if a client turns away from it  
 You expend it in searching for a recipient  
 Take of my praise for you what it is worth but  
 What is fit in praise is not expected of me  
 I am astonished at what you do, for less than it  
 Astonishes the guardian angels who write.

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63 He spoke praising Amr ibn Sulaiman al Sharabi who at that time was superintending the ransoms between the Rum and the Arabs. (177)

We knew parting serious but high clouds are more  
 And we suspect gossips and tears from them  
 He whose heart is with another, what is his state?  
 Whose secret is in his eyes, how can he hide it?  
 When we met and the distance and our guard were  
 Forgetful of us yet I wept and you smiled  
 I had not seen a moon smiling before her face  
 And before me you had not seen the dead talk  
 One hurt by love, like her back is by her thighs  
 With waning strength he complains of her acts  
 With hair bringing back night though dawn flames  
 A face bringing back dawn in dark night  
 And if my heart were her home it would be empty  
 But yet the army of love there is immense  
 The hearthstones are there fired like the heart  
 The traces destroyed like my body emaciate  
 I wet my gown there and the shower helped me  
 Its tears were pure and in my tears was blood  
 If what flowed over my cheeks had not been blood  
 The trickle would not be red nor I be sick  
 By my soul the dream has visited me after a sleep  
 Its word was: After us can you savor dozing?  
 Good-by! If fear and greed were not part of it  
 We would say that Abu Hafsa had said goodbye  
 A lover of bounty longs to lavish his wealth  
 Passionately as the enslaved lover makes love  
 I swear if there were not in every hair of him  
 A lion we would say of him: You are a lion.  
 Don't we diminish his joy since he is more than it? 15  
 We decry him and disparaging is forbidden  
 He exceeds comparison for his hand is no sea  
 Nor he a lion or his thoughts swords  
 Nor his wounds healed or his holes seen  
 Nor can his edges be dulled or notched  
 Nor any matter be tied up which he has untied  
 Nor any matter loosed which he has knotted  
 He does not trail his skirts out of self-conceit  
 Nor does he serve the world but it serves him  
 He desires no permanency and his giving destroys  
 Nor is the enemy safe from him but he is safe  
 Sweeter than wine with water the mention of him  
 Better than fortune when a poor man meets him  
 More scarce than the anka among birds is his equal  
 More rare than that one he denies as his client  
 More supplied with gifts after the giving  
 Than showers after showers in continual rain  
 High in bounty, if he saw the sleep of his eyes  
 As avarice he would swear he would not doze  
 If he said: Bring a dirham I have not yet given  
 To a client--there'd be no such dirham for men 25

And if what delights him troubled men before him  
 His bravery and generosity affect him most  
 He pours juice of the mulberry in every raid  
 With a sheath's bright orphan and he orphans  
 Ransom price not put off from his saddle for a day  
 Saddled horse bridled after going on a raid  
 He crosses lands of Rum, and a swamp is bright  
 With his swords but air is black with dust,  
 To the king of the tyrants and how many regiments      30  
 Encounter him as their death and they know it?  
 How many virgins of the Christians show to him  
 Fair cheeks that soon will be clawed?  
 Rows for a lion among lions whose protection  
 Is in backs of stallions and upright spears  
 The fates are absent from them when he is absent  
 And approach their camps when he approaches  
 Restored by you many a captive remains unbound  
 Live Ibn Sulaiman and the wealth he shares!  
 He rewards you who gave his messenger's religion      35  
 As a gift, hand and mouth cannot attain thanks  
 Be gentle for if you are not merciful to yourself  
 In giving yet you are granted mercy  
 Your home is the goal and your enemies speechless  
 Your rivals lost and your gifts myriad  
 Visiting you for me is putting aside the kings  
 When the sea appears the dust is not for me  
 So live for if slaves are ransom for a lord from  
 Death, you are not lost and earth is at peace.

64 He spoke praising Abd al Wahid ibn Abbas ibn Abu al Asbai the Katib. (182)

O those camels of the beloved! truly these tears  
 Beat the cheeks like they pound the stones  
 For they know her whom parting has loaded on you  
 And they go softly with obedient bridle  
 Once it was shame that forbade me to weep  
 But today weeping forbids the prohibition  
 Until it is as if there is a sob for every bone  
 Under its skin and in every vein tears      5  
 For one to seduce the fawn there is enough light  
 For its lovers and my being slain in this way  
 She unveils but parting veils her with paleness  
 Veils her eye hollows though there is no veil  
 It's as if it with the tears dripping over it,  
 Were gold, a double thread of pearls inset  
 She displays those three locks of her hair  
 To night and they show my night as a fourth  
 She confronts the moon in the sky with her face  
 And shows me the two celestial lights at once  
 Restore my embrace as a cloud waters your camp      10  
 If your embrace were like it, it would not end

Thunder shows you the sky's lightning, the plain  
 Like a sea, and the hills a fertile meadow  
 Like the fingers of Abd al Wahid flowing which  
 Gush and shelter one who longs but fears  
 He was familiar to manliness from youth as if he  
 Had it with milk he sucked in infancy  
 His gifts are considered charms on his account  
 One is used to them so if lost one fears  
 He leaves good deeds like swords that flash 15  
 And the high acts like spears at the ready  
 Smiling to his clients a gracious smile  
 Its flashes cover the blazing lightning  
 Revealing to his enemies an impetuous bound  
 And if its shoulders touch the sky it shakes  
 The determined, wakeful, the strong in knowledge  
 The prudent, warlike, generous and brilliant  
 A writer and brisk, persuasive and bounteous  
 Understanding, reasonable, imperious, eloquent  
 A soul whose are the people of the times since 20  
 He is waster of souls, separating the gathered  
 Gifts that have the bounty of rainclouds for he  
 Pours out on settled land and waste places  
 Forever he is splitting huge masses collected  
 Gathering masses of generosity to be split  
 He rejoices in gifts with the rejoicing of a sword  
 On hope's day his joy is as on battle day  
 O enrichment, meeting him is hope to a poor man--  
 His prayer after a service when he prays  
 Stop! but you do not stop till the goal is passed 25  
 You go where stars beneath you bring content  
 You have settled in the places where acts are high  
 Such a place neither men nor jinn settle in  
 You seized their excellence and what delights men  
 In it, but no man has joy in what delights him  
 Judgment is executed by what you desire as if it  
 Were yours; when you decide a matter so it is  
 The stubborn fate submits to you as if it were  
 A slave when you call: Come here swiftly.  
 Your honor devours the boaster, and the camels 30  
 Of my art limp as they turn from their goals  
 They run the course of the sun in their sky  
 And cross to its west and outpass the orient  
 If the world were linked to another such as this  
 You would imbue it and, I fear, not be content  
 And if one were to deny claims for you beyond this  
 Allah witnesses the truth of what is claimed  
 When a speaker gives evidence of your condition  
 He keeps little things among many estates  
 If a hero is claimed to be no other than such 35  
 A rajul, then call all other men toes  
 If glory did not achieve generosity except thus  
 Then rain would be the stingiest gift  
 Abbas made your brightness, O his son, to follow  
 As a vision for us and until resurrection.

65 He was crossing a place known as the gardens of the land of Qansarin and he heard the lions roaring and spoke. (186)

Is your neighbor noble action O lions of gardens?  
 Then dwell with me or if base then good-by  
 Behind me and in front of me are many enemies  
 I guard against thieves both among you and them  
 Are you in agreement with me in what I desire?  
 For I know more about the means of livelihood  
 Then your provision comes to you from each region  
 And you are rich in your booty and I share.

66 He spoke praising Abd al Rahman ibn Mubarak of Antioch.  
 (186)

A gift of departure to me and flight in union  
 Returns me to illness like a waning moon  
 For the body suffers a decrease and that which  
 Diminishes in it increases in sadness  
 Stop over the traces in the plain of Rayya  
 Like a beauty spot on the cheek beside a spot  
 At the deserted mounds that are like the stars  
 Near the courtyards that are like the night  
 And the drain trenches there as if they were 5  
 Ankle rings making no noise on plump legs  
 Do not blame me for I am most loving of lovers  
 To her, O most censorious of reprovers  
 What does distance want of the viper who has  
 Tasted heat of deserts and cold of the night?  
 For he is sharper in fear than the king of death  
 Farther traveling in darkness than a ghost  
 By a death in glory a lover is fascinated  
 For a life he drags out in mean hatred  
 We are riders like the jinn in human clothes 10  
 On birds who have the shape of fine camels  
 From among the daughters of Jadila going with us  
 The gait of the days to death in the desert  
 All of a good she-camel in the desert where  
 It leaves a track of fire like a wick in oil  
 Aiming at the full moon, the sea and the lion,  
 In Ibn Mubarak who is the most excellent  
 He who visits him visits Solomon in his kingdom  
 Glorious, and Joseph in all of his beauty  
 And like spring he smiles with showers there 15  
 Flowers of thanks from gardens of eminence  
 From it the east wind perfumes us with a breeze  
 Bringing back the soul to the dead hopes  
 A care of friends is the desire of Abd al Rahman  
 And destruction of enemies and of wealth  
 The greatest blame for him is stinginess but  
 Jousting for him is the prototype of the lion

Wounds for him are the calls for help  
 That precede his gifts to the clients  
 This burning lamp, this purifier of the heart, 20  
 This remnant of the deputies of the prophet  
 Take the water from his feet and sprinkle it  
 On cities to make safe from sudden earthquake  
 Rub the cloth of his shirts you two upon  
 Your sores to heal them from sickness  
 Filling with his gifts the east and the west  
 And with his terrors the hearts of men  
 He withholds his right hand from the world  
 But if he desires he takes it with his left  
 He himself is his army and his acts are victory 25  
 And respect for him is blades and spears  
 His is a blow at the head of affluence  
 Whose impact is upon the heads of heroes  
 They are always in fear of him at the moment  
 Of attack though it is not the day of battle  
 A man whose clay is made of the red amber  
 While the clay of mankind is earthenware  
 What remains of his clay when it meets the water  
 Brings sweetness to the cool liquid  
 The stability of his good judgment estranges men 30  
 But it has the firmness of the mountains  
 I am not of those that your love of peace blinds  
 Even if you do not seem to witness the battle  
 That is something that life takes care of for you  
 Your enemies are vile and few are equal  
 He is forgiving but if rage turns him from that  
 Their skulls are made the shoes  
 For the horses that enter into battle bare  
 But come out with blood as horse cloth  
 The steel borrows its color and he casts 35  
 Its color on the locks of the youth  
 You are at times more bitter than deadly poison  
 At times sweeter than freshest water  
 For humanity is where you are and men are not  
 Men in the place where you are absent.

67 He spoke praising Abu Ali Harun ibn Abd al Aziz al Awaraji the Katib. (191)

The guards are secure against your visits at dark  
 Since where you are in the dark there is light  
 Restlessness of beauty unveils her for she is musk  
 And her moving in the night is the sun  
 I grieve for the grief by which you deranged me  
 From knowing it for by that a veil covers me  
 My complaint is of the loss of a sickness  
 Which existed when limbs were still mine  
 You painted your eye in my mind like a wound  
 The wideness of both of them is copied there 5

It pierced my fine woven armor and seldom  
 The brown shafted lance broke through there  
 I am a rock of the wadi dashed against by a flood  
 And when I speak then I am the starry Twins  
 And if I hide from the simple there is an excuse  
 That the eye of the blind cannot see me  
 The habits of the nights make the camel doubt:  
 Is my breast broader or the waste land for her?  
 She goes all night in haste hurrying on her fat 10  
 Emaciation speeds her through the desert  
 The saddle straps are slack and her hoofs  
 Are pierced though her path is a virgin  
 She changes color for fear of perishing  
 There, like the chameleon changes color  
 Between me and Abu Ali there are, like him,  
 Mountain peaks and like them are the hopes  
 And the trails of the Lubnan: how to cross them  
 Since it is winter and its summer is winter?  
 The snows there have obscured my paths for me 15  
 As if in their whiteness they were dark  
 And so the generous one when he stays in a city  
 Makes the silver flow there and the water stay  
 The rains froze and if the rain stars knew him,  
 As they know, they'd been amazed and not shone  
 There is a longing for his script in every heart  
 Until it is as if his ink were passion  
 For every eye there is peace in his presence  
 Until it's like his absence were eyesickness  
 He is guided in action which the poets cannot 20  
 Guide right in speech until he acts  
 On every day the coming and going is for rhymes  
 In his heart, and attention is for his ear  
 There are raids on what he has gathered as if  
 In every verse were a band of shining heroes  
 He does wrong to the stingy in charging them so  
 That they become, even they, equals to him  
 We blame them yet by them we know his virtue  
 It is by their opposites that things are known  
 One whose profit is being attacked and his hurt 25  
 Is being left alone if only the enemy knew  
 For peace breaks the wings of his wealth  
 With his gifts and battle heals them again  
 He gives and huge gifts come from his hand's gift  
 Wisdom is seen by a glance at his opinions  
 A separation of two tastes, a union of strengths  
 It is as if he were prosperity and misfortune  
 It is as if he were what his enemies do not want  
 While showing to his partisans what they crave  
 O one whose soul is a gift of generosity-- 30  
 Since no beggar comes to him for it--  
 Thank your clients, do not worry at their loss  
 For a legacy of what they don't take is a gift  
 The dead do not number a legion of the few  
 Except when the living lament because of you

No thought is split from that which is beneath it  
 Until the terror of you settles there  
 You were not named O Harun till lots were drawn  
 And the names were in agony with your name  
 So you came but others did not share your name      35  
 Yet mankind is equal in regard to your gifts  
 Truly universal so the cities are filled with you  
 You surpass all so that this eulogy is paltry  
 You are generous until you almost become miserly  
 Changing at the goal and from joy to weeping  
 You originate things whose source is known by you  
 And you add to it so the origin is unknown  
 Honor has a balance in you for its shortcoming  
 Glory is free from your asking an increase  
 If you are asked it's not that you make need      40  
 When you are hid your good deeds betray you  
 And if you are praised it is not to gain eminence  
 Praise is for those who are grateful to Allah  
 If you are rained on it is not that you are dry  
 Fertile land is watered and the sea rained on  
 The clouds do not imitate your bounty but rather  
 Are feverish for it so the downpour is sweat  
 The sun of our day never confronted this face  
 Except with a face that had no shame in it  
 So with what a foot did you run to the heights?      45  
 Surface of the moon was sole for your shoe  
 The times are yours as a guard from time  
 And death is yours as a ransom from death  
 If you were not of humankind which is of you  
 Eve would be barren in birth of her offspring.

68 He spoke describing a dog which Abu Awaraji set upon  
 the deer and he hunted with him alone. (201)

Many a campsite has not been our resting place  
 Nor for anything but the morning cloud  
 Dew on the khuzami and the odor of garanful  
 Dwelling place of wild beasts not settled  
 There appeared to us there a deer and gazelles  
 Doomed in itself it is far from rescue  
 Beauty of neck does without ornament in a collar  
 And the habit of nakedness without the dress  
 As if he were daubed with oil of sandalwood      5  
 Confronting as if with the horns of the oryx  
 He comes upon the dog all of a sudden  
 And the trainer loosens the tight leash  
 Wide jawed with collar and chain  
 Thin bellied, long, ready to spring, bite  
 When they bleat at him he does not stir  
 Strong of back and with muscles lithe  
 His glance is straight when he turns around  
 As if he were looking in a mirror

He runs where it is roughest as on a plain 10  
 He chases and reaches the game and is trailed  
 He sits like the bedouin who warms himself  
 With four fine twisted legs without a flaw  
 The front ones wide set and the back ones light  
 Their tracks imprint themselves on the rocks  
 By being plaited in leaping almost  
 He joins the breast and the haunches  
 And between his top and his bottom parts  
 It's a first shower of running and a second  
 It is as if he were fashioned from a stone 15  
 That has been fixed on a flexible lance  
 Possessed of a short haired tail that isn't docked  
 It traces on the dust a florid script  
 As if it were separate from his body  
 If it were a feeble motion it would ruin a whip  
 Desire attained, the hunter's own authority  
 A hobble for deer and death for fawns  
 The two oppose each other alone in the dust  
 The one behind pledged death to the first  
 In the dirt neither one is to be distracted 20  
 He does not fail to avoid every mistake  
 So he is rushing on the place of terror  
 He makes a vast sea the width of a brook  
 Until as one says: You've got him, at him!  
 He bares the fangs like they were swords  
 They do not know the work of the smith's file  
 A vehicle for the pains of the Revelation  
 As if they had the swiftness of the north wind  
 As if they had the weight of Mount Yadbol  
 As if they were of the wideness of plains 25  
 As if he from his knowledge of killing  
 Could teach Hippocrates the bleeding of a vein  
 And change that which leaps to that which falls  
 And what is in the skin becomes what is in a pot  
 Nor does the lack of a falcon worry us with him  
 While you remain in peace O Abu Ali the  
 Kingdom is almighty Allah's and then to me.

69 And he spoke praising Badr ibn Ammar ibn Ismail al Asdi al Tabaristani. (206)

Is it a dream that we see or some new times  
 Or does creation return in shape of living man?  
 He beams upon us and makes us shine by him  
 As if the stars found us in the ascendant  
 We see by means of Badr and by his fathers  
 The moon has a father and the moon children  
 We seek his pleasure by leaving that which we  
 Desire for him; that we leave prostration  
 A prince who is a prince; upon him bounty depends 5  
 Bounty is stingy insofar as he does not give

He speaks about his generosity with dislike  
 As if he had a jealous person's heart in this  
 He proceeds except in regard to fleeing  
 He has power except in regard to his profit  
 As if your liberality were a part of destiny  
 For what you give from it we find bounteous  
 Many an attack in the battle you have repelled  
 With a flexible brown one dark with blood  
 Many a terror you revealed, many a blade you broke 10  
 Many a lance you left splintered in ruin  
 Many a gift you have given without a promise  
 Many a hero you outdistanced with a threat  
 With a flight of your swords from their sheaths  
 The necks desired that they be the scabbards  
 To the skull they return from the like of it  
 They see the return from a drink as a drink  
 You destroy the souls of the enemy with steel  
 Until you ruin the steel with their souls  
 You consume that which lasts in their lives 15  
 And make last what you own by consuming  
 As if you from poverty desired wealth  
 And from death in battle desired immortality  
 This is a character that leads one to its lord  
 And a sign of glory shown to the slaves  
 He is upright and sweet yet he is bitter  
 We scorn the sea and the lions through him  
 Description is remote in spite of its nearness  
 It bewilders thought and wears out the seeker  
 For you are the only one of the children of Adam  
 But you are not lonely for the loss of an equal.

70 He spoke praising Badr ibn Ammar ibn Ismail and he was sick and the doctor bled him but he let the flow go beyond measure and he was harmed by it. (210)

Farthest separation from a beauty is stinginess  
 It is distance which no camel will undertake  
 I'm patient of what lasts that is not hers  
 A weariness of lasting weariness in her  
 It is as if her outline when she turns were  
 Drunk from the wine of her intoxicating glance  
 The buttocks pull on her below her waist  
 As if they were trembling at her departure  
 Mine is a heat of passion in sucking her mouth 5  
 Patience leaves me when it is uninterrupted  
 The lips, the breasts, the ankles and the wrists  
 Are my sickness and that black hair  
 And many a desert I have crossed on two feet  
 A trained, strong backed camel foundered there  
 With my sword girded on and with my experience  
 Rewarding me, enveloped in the dark  
 As for a friend I may reject his companionship  
 Such changes do not worry me at his parting

There is coming and going between dawn and sunset  
And change in the cities of their sister  
And in the visiting of the Emir Badr ibn Ammar  
Employment apart from work for mankind  
He becomes wealth himself just as his wealth is  
For him who heeds it without hinting or asking  
The times are easy on his heart so that  
Neither grief nor frivolity shows in it  
Due to the submission of death to him almost  
He destroys one whose term has not yet come  
Due to strength of his will almost that which  
He does is done of itself before the action  
His qualities are made known by his eye  
As if he had anointed it with sagacity  
I tremble at the kindling of his thinking  
From that I fear he'll burst in flames  
A noble chief, his enemies when they surrender  
In flight want to boast of that which they do  
He turns to them a face of each swimming horse  
Its four legs arrive before its eyes do  
Short haired, filling the girth with the belly  
The tail hairs are as long as its tail bone  
If it turned its back you'd say it has no neck  
Or faced forward you'd say it has no rump  
The lance thrust twists and the earth shakes  
As if in its heart terror were struck  
The blood has already stained its cheeks as when  
Shame stains the cheek of a maiden  
The horses are weeping as their skins sweat  
With tears that the eyes do not let fall  
A leader, there is no plain for his army  
It's as if all the flat land were mountainous  
Lest the rain should touch them the assault  
Protects them, so thick the lances interlace  
0 you are a moon 0 a sea 0 a cloud 0  
A lion of the bush 0 death 0 man!  
Truly the fingers are that which ponder things  
Since you make proverbs in every place  
For you are of those people who when making gifts  
Find everything short of their lives stinginess  
Their hearts have an edge quickly unsheathed  
Their stature in height is a lance put in rest  
You are he who disproves his name in a dispute  
Between the Indian sword and flexible lance  
You, by my life, are Badr the shining yet you  
In the uproar of battle are dark as Zuhal  
An army is booty if you are not its lord  
A land without ornament if you adorn it not  
You are sought from its east and its west  
Until the beasts and the roads complain of you  
You leave nothing except a little good health  
And illness would be sent if begged of you  
The excuse for your two accidents is  
Cowardice of a doctor and bravery of a lancet

You offered a gift to the palm of the leech  
 And hope did not know how to make a cut  
 And if the treatment could harm the inside of it  
 Often kisses oppressed the outside of it  
 The bloodletting tore open its vein but  
 Censure cannot split the flow of his bounty  
 Fear made him slip when you stretched it out 40  
 As if he were in a hurry because of his skill  
 He strove to the limit of his diligence and arrived  
 Without diligence; may his mother be bereft!  
 Practice achieves the success that is sought for  
 But in deep matters there's many a slip  
 Weep for it since with what it possessed  
 And what it shed it has given much to you  
 The like of you O Badr does not exist nor  
 Is government sound except by such as you.

## 71 And he spoke also praising him. (216)

My survival wishes that they would not saddle up  
 That they bridle patience's beauty not camels  
 They turn away suddenly and it is as if parting  
 Scared me so I am surprised by deceit  
 And the gait of their camels is easy paced  
 But flow of tears in their track is strong  
 It is as if the camel was there upon my eyelids  
 Kneeling and then it arose and tears flowed  
 Parting screened the gazelle maidens from me 5  
 And assisted the veil and the curtain  
 They wear the brocade not to be beautiful  
 But rather to protect beauty with it  
 They plait the braids not for the ornament  
 But rather for fear the hair should go astray  
 By my body! there is someone wastes it and if  
 My sash were a pearl's hole it would be loose  
 And if I were otherwise than asleep  
 I'd spend nights thinking I was my own ghost  
 She seems the moon and bends as a branch of willow 10  
 She spreads amber and looks with gazelle eyes  
 As if grief were madly in love with my heart  
 The moment of her flight it finds an embrace  
 So the world was for those who were before me  
 Misfortunes did not last in its mutability  
 Perplexity was strongest for me in happiness  
 Its master was sure of this variability  
 I have gotten used to traveling and made earth  
 My saddle and my Gorair camel strong  
 I have not wanted any resting place on earth 15  
 And I have not decided to stop at any place  
 On a swaying one as if the wind were beneath me  
 I steer it to the southward or to the north

Toward the moon Ibn Ammar who is not  
 A crescent moon at the first of the month  
 He does not increase from any decrease in him  
 He continues as Emir and he will not cease  
 Without compare even if you observe in him  
 The model for every remote beauty  
 He is the sword of Ibn Raiq who is the hope 20  
 Of the sword of al Muttaqi in the day of war  
 Spearhead on the Banu Ma'ad's lance that is  
 The Banu Asad when they call for the attack  
 Strongest of the victors in hand and in sword  
 In power and in protection and in family  
 Most eminent in honor for himself and his people  
 Noblest in father's and mother's lineage  
 He is the most worthy of the praise which is  
 For the world and its people an absurdity  
 Double remains of that to be said about him 25  
 When one has not omitted anything to say  
 O son of the thrusters with every light lance  
 In places where a hero complains of a cough  
 O son of the strikers with every sharp blade  
 Among the Arabs both on high and below  
 I see the would-be poets rage to condemn me  
 But who praises sickness that can't be cured?  
 And possessed of a mouth bitter with illness  
 One finds bitter for him the sweetest water  
 They said: Has he brought you to the Thurya stars? 30  
 I said: Yes, if I want to come down to them.  
 He is the destroyer, the war horse, the hostile  
 The Indian steel and the long dark lance  
 And their leader who teaches them briskness  
 With a tribe that he overwhelms at dawn  
 With horses roaming with upright spears  
 As if on their shafts were flaming wicks  
 When they trample the rocks with their forelegs  
 They turn them to sand by force of hind legs  
 The answer to one who asked me if he had an equal: 35  
 No! nor is there to you if you ask, O no!  
 Indeed everyone is safe from poverty through you  
 They count their hope in you as wealth  
 Some hearts are cautious of you until  
 Their fear becomes cowardice for them  
 Your happiness is to make all men happy  
 You teach them familiarity to you by this  
 When they make a request you thank them for it  
 If they are silent you beg them to ask a favor  
 Happiest is he who sees us as seekers 40  
 To gain a request that he can grant  
 Your arrow dispatches the man it encounters  
 Like a bow released that strikes no men  
 For the arrows never remain at rest  
 It's as if the feathers were seeking the point  
 You get ahead of the winners and do not run  
 You cross the heights and do not climb

I swear that if you were on the right of a thing  
 Men would never be fit for the left of it  
 I am turned by you as my eye by the heavens  
 And if its stars rise they are the qualities  
 I am amazed at you: How were you able to grow?  
 For you were given perfection in the cradle.

45

72 And he spoke impromptu about him when he was drinking  
 and the fruit and narcissus were set out. (223)

Truly Badr ibn Ammar is a thunderhead  
 A downpour in which is reward and punishment  
 Truly Badr is a misfortune and a good fortune  
 And the fates and thrusting and slashing  
 He does not let sight roam unless it praise him  
 By its power of giving but necks blame it  
 The death of his enemies is not his worry  
 He guards against disappointment to wolves  
 Terror is his for those who have no fear of him  
 Hoped for bounty is his that is not feared  
 He pierces horsemen in eyes to right and left  
 And the dust of battle is a veil to the sun  
 Dispatcher of himself to the dreadful which  
 Has no return for the soul which falls therein  
 My father! your perfume is not from our narcissus  
 Your stories are not those of this drinking  
 It is not disapproved if you come out ahead  
 Nor is it prohibited to the Arab horse to win.

5

73 He spoke commemorating the hunting of a lion. (224)

On the cheek since the companion decided to go  
 A rain by which cheeks increase sterility  
 O evil glance you destroy sleep and you leave  
 On my heart's edge what I feel as dullness  
 It had some of the kohl of my request but  
 My death depicted the request in my heart  
 I find abstinence for the like of you manliness  
 And patience fine except for your absence  
 And I saw your many coquettish as loveable  
 And I saw a little coquetry as wearying  
 The camel complains of your buttocks on top of it.  
 Complaint which finds your love intrusive  
 The pull of the bridle on her heart makes me envy  
 Her mouth toward you like one seeking a kiss  
 The eye of a beauty among the chaste excites me  
 On the day of parting to longing and thirst  
 He can protect from killers other than her  
 This eye, Badr ibn Ammar ibn Ismail

He dispels great care the same as she 10  
 And he leaves a great kingdom abased  
 Pertinacious when the debtor delays with his debt  
 He makes a sword surety for what he intends  
 Eloquent when speech makes him put down his veil  
 He gives a wise heart by his discoursing  
 His bounty prepares the time so it is generous  
 Through him yet time has been miserly of him  
 And as if lightning on the back of a cloud  
 Were Indian steel unsheathed in his hand  
 The place for its hilt flows with gifts 15  
 If they are a stream there is no riverbed  
 Its edges are thin for they as it were  
 Display emaciation from their love of necks  
 O he rolls a fierce lion in dirt with his whip  
 For whom do you keep the polished sword?  
 A misfortune befall the Jordan in it  
 It piled a mound of skulls in a company  
 A red one, when it reddened Buhaira drinking  
 Its roar reached the Forat and the Nile 20  
 Stained with the blood of horsemen, wearing  
 In its lair the thicket as some of its mane  
 Its eyes are not approached without appearing  
 In darkness as fire of a party of travelers  
 In the solitude of a monk except that it  
 Does not know what is lawful or forbidden  
 It treads the ground confident in its pride  
 It's as if it were a doctor probing an illness  
 It erects its forelock at the top of its skull  
 Until it becomes for its head a crown  
 You think that since it echoes itself it 25  
 Attacks that in the fierceness of its rage  
 For fear of it they shorten the step and it's as if  
 An armored warrior rides his horse hobbled  
 It throws its prey down and roars before it  
 You keep coming on as it suspects an intruder  
 For you are alike in nature as to boldness  
 But you are different in lavishing nourishment  
 A lion that sees his limbs in you, both pairs  
 Slender at back and muscular in fore part  
 In the saddle of a thirsty, jointed one, springy 30  
 Her uniqueness rejects any comparison to it  
 One who gets to the goal and if she does not  
 Yield the bridle's place it is not touched  
 The sides of her neck sweat when you spur her  
 The knot of her bridle seems to be loose  
 The lion continues to gather itself to its chest  
 Until you think its width is its length  
 It beats on the rocks with its chest as if it  
 Wanted a way into the mountain floor  
 It's as if its eye deceived it and it approached 35  
 Not seeing the great calamity impending  
 The pride of a noble one has a defect that leaves  
 The greatest numbers as small in its eyes

Shame is a burning and there is no dread  
 Of death for one who fears what is said  
 It anticipates a meeting with a rushing jump  
 If you don't collide, it'd shoot past a mile  
 Its strength deserts it when you confront it  
 It thinks to win by surrender and by falling  
 Its death gripped it by legs and neck 40  
 It's as if you held it in an iron collar  
 Its cousins heard of it and its condition  
 They escaped in flight being afraid of you  
 Its flight is more bitter than what it fled from  
 And like its death if it had not died fighting  
 The ruin which took bravery as a companion  
 Is a sermon to one who took flight as a friend  
 If your knowledge of Allah were shared among  
 Men, Allah would not have sent the messenger  
 And if your words were among them he would not 45  
 Have sent down Koran or Torah or Evangel  
 And if that which you give them existed before  
 You give it them, they would not know hope  
 Indeed you are known and yet not really known  
 You are unknown yet not ignored in obscurity  
 Fate speaks with satisfaction in your authority  
 And in what a fine horse accepts with a whinny  
 Not every one who seeks the heights gets through  
 To them, not every man is a stallion.

74 A letter came from Ibn Raiq to Badr adding the seashore to his command and he said. (231)

Do you enjoy Tyre or we enjoy it for your sake?  
 Tyre is not much to you for you are one of his  
 Not small are Jordan and the coasts which are  
 Given by him except alongside your worth  
 Countries envy each other until if they had souls  
 The east and the west would travel to you  
 And if the city were to lose its prince  
 It would weep if it had eyes and mouth.

75 And he came to him and saw an official robe before him folded and it was his but he kept it folded and Abu Tayyib delayed because a sickness had come on him. (231)

I see a beautiful garment that is folded  
 My sickness prevents me from seeing it on you  
 Granted that you folded it and withdrew from it  
 Have you put away what is beautiful in you?  
 Indeed its external honors are continually  
 In conflict with that which is near your body

The eyes look on you when you are in it  
 As if the hearts of men were on you  
 When I described your virtue in words  
 It is as if I counted grains of sands.

76 He spoke praising him as he was going to the coast and then returning to Tiberias. (232)

Love is that which denies words to our tongue  
 But sweetest sigh of lover is what he declares  
 I wish the darling who fled with loss of sleep  
 Without sin would come back as emaciation came  
 We parted and if you describe us you won't know  
 Our color among those that change color  
 And our souls are kindled so that indeed  
 I fear the gossips will burn up between us  
 I am ransom for the departed one whom I followed      5  
 With a single glance between double sighs  
 I did not know the unlucky event the first time  
 Then I recognized it and it came often  
 I traveled over the world's deserts and my camel  
 Was there and my time dawn and midnight  
 So I stayed there where bounty made me stop  
 And I gained my reward from Badr ibn Ammar  
 Abu Husain's gifts are too small for baskets  
 Even if the vessels are those of the times  
 Courage! he does not need any mention of it      10  
 Its fame forbids the cowards to be cowards  
 His sword hanger hangs at his warlike shoulder  
 He never retakes, how return and not turn?  
 It is as if his thrusting on in front of him  
 Were in fear lest he be struck from the rear  
 The sharpness of his wit cancels the uncertain  
 He judges hidden matters with certainty  
 The strong are afraid of his unforeseen attack  
 They are always in a shroud even in solitude  
 He promotes his will and it is sure for him      15  
 He thinks of what is afar and then it is near  
 He finds the iron on the softness of his skin  
 Like a garment lighter than silk and softer  
 More bitter than the loss of the beloved for him  
 Is the loss of a sword that has lost sheaths  
 Fear does not settle within his breast even  
 For a day nor good will that does no good  
 What is future is deduced from his knowledge  
 As if that which will be is written in it  
 The understanding falls short of his attainment      20  
 Like it does that which is in heaven and earth  
 He who is not killed by him is one freed by him  
 He who does not submit is one he destroys  
 When you come in procession from the shore to us  
 The desolation goes to it from amongst us

The road exhales since you do not pass a place  
 Except there remains a perfume settled in it  
 If the trees understood that which you bring them  
 They'd stretch their branches greeting you  
 The jinn follow the paintings on the tent out of 25  
 Love of them, and they turn their eyes to you  
 Our horses rejoice and we imagine they would  
 Dance with us, if shame did not hinder them  
 You approach smiling but the horse is frowning  
 It trots with the double ring-mail and spear  
 Its hoofs suspend the dust around them  
 If you want a fast pace on it, it can do it  
 The command is your command and hearts thrill  
 In the battle between death and the reward  
 I was amazed until I no longer wondered at swords 30  
 I looked until I could not see the flashing  
 As for me I see you as an army of generosity  
 Amid an army, and a mine of eminence  
 The heart understands what I did during absence  
 And what I left for fear you would know  
 Your departure was clear to me as a penalty for it  
 Nothing that I suffered by it was easy  
 Forgive me as I am your ransom and grant me now  
 To be chosen for a gift of which I am part  
 Prohibit the advice about me by those in error 40  
 For a free man is tormented by sons of whores  
 And when a fellow flings out words openly  
 In assembly, take his word for what it means  
 The tricks of fools return upon themselves  
 The hostility of poets is an evil possession  
 The society of gossips is cursed for it is  
 Like a guest bringing regrets as guests  
 The hatred of the jealous when I find you content  
 Is a misfortune too light for me to weigh  
 He who exists in your lordship as an unbeliever 45  
 Apart from us is assured by your favor to us  
 The lands are deprived of the rising sun at night  
 Allah atones with you so they are not sad.

77 And Badr ordered that the people be kept apart from him. (238)

You have ordered the screen for seclusion  
 Alas you have no power over the veil  
 One whose forehead is light and whose gifts  
 Can't be hid cannot hide himself from sight  
 And if you veil yourself yet you are not hid  
 If you go in yet you are outwardness itself.

78 And Badr poured out for him but he had no desire to

drink and said: (238)

You don't know anyone I drink with but you  
 This is only because of your love for me  
 And not for the love of wine, and so I  
 Become hopeful and respectful of you.

79 And he spoke also. (239)

Drinking with the Emir blames those who blame me  
 For drinking, and that is enough answer to spies  
 The cloud of your hand pours rain on my lands  
 I bring you thanks; your kindness is my bearer  
 When do I rise to praise and you do not help?  
 Words of you are highest power for the speaker.

80 And Badr repented of drinking but he saw him drinking  
 and he said. (239)

O king whose drinking companions are  
 Partners in his kingdom without his power  
 Every day amongst us the blood of the grape  
 Makes you repent from repenting to kill it.  
 Truth has some of the nature of wine so tell us  
 Is it from wine you repent or from leaving it?

81 And he spoke also about this. (239)

Badr is a youth who if he were his own client  
 A day, his joy would be more than his wealth  
 One's actions are perplexed at his actions  
 He minimizes what he does by his demands.  
 You see a moon! there are two clouds in the place  
 Of his countenance on the left and the right  
 He sheds blood by his bounty not his power  
 Nobly for birds of prey are of his household  
 If he destroys what he has yet there remains  
 A memory. Time will end before its end.

82 He made a request of him and he granted it so he arose  
 and spoke. (240)

I have just returned with a request granted  
 I hate to be kept waiting in the assembly  
 You are the one who prolongs my stay here  
 Better for my soul than my life in it.

83 Badr invited him to the assembly and he said. (240)

O Badr, though talk is obscure, you are one  
 For whom creation does not have an equal  
 You have become great until if you were faith  
 Gabriel would not be intrusted with it  
 Some of creation are set apart from others  
 When you are present then all above are low.

84 And he said also about him. (241)

The horses are your ransom and they are marked  
 And Indian swords and they are unsheathed  
 I have described you in verses that gallop  
 But though they are many adjectives remain  
 The actions of the men of old are a darkness  
 But your acts by their acts are the new morn.

85 And he made ready to depart at night and said. (241)

The night passes but excellence in you does not  
 Your face is sweeter to the eyes than clouds  
 So that I am garlanded by you with favor  
 Part of me showing by this to others part of me  
 Peace from Him whose throne is above the heavens  
 Marked by that O best of those who tread earth.

86 And he spoke again and he was playing chess and there  
 was much rain and he said. (242)

Don't you see O king of things hoped for  
 The wonders which I see in the cloud?  
 The earth complains to it of its absence  
 And sucks its drops of water as saliva  
 One fancies that in chess is my desire  
 But in you is my hope and in you my goal  
 I will go and peace be upon you from me  
 My absence is my night, morning my return.

87 The drinking got hold of Abu Tayyib and he intended  
 to go but he had no power over his words so he said,  
 though he did not know it. (242)

It got of me what I got of it  
 By Allah what drunkenness can do

This was my dismissal to my quarters  
Is it permitted O Emir?

88 In the morning he regained control of himself so he said. (242)

I found the wine overwhelming  
It stirred in the heart its passions  
It spoils the eloquence of a man  
And yet it adorns his character  
The best of a young man is his reason  
And he who has reason hates its loss  
Indeed I died last night a death there  
And he who tastes it does not relish death.

89 He spoke describing a dancer who was present in the assembly in the capacity of a maid servant. (243)

A girl whose hair is half her length  
Being appointed she performs her task  
She dances around and in her hand a nosegay  
Her gesture is responsible for her dislike  
For if she makes us drunk, that she is ignorant  
Of what she does to us is her excuse.

90 She came around and stopped opposite Abu Tayyib and he said. (243)

A girl who has no spirit in her body  
In the heart of her lover is passion  
In her hand is a power that shows itself  
Perfume in every good of her goodness  
I will drink the cup that she offers  
But tears of my eye spread on the cheek.

91 She passed around and stopped opposite and she raised her foot and he said. (243)

O possessed of eminence and mine of culture  
Our lord and son of a lord of Arabs  
You have knowledge of every wonder  
And if we ask, aside from you no answer  
Is this one who approaches you a dancer  
Or does she raise her foot in weariness?

92 And he spoke also about her. (244)

May Allah lengthen the rule of the Emir  
 Excellent! Mudhar puts on honor in him  
 For drinkers a girl; roughness is beneath her  
 Her father was neither jinn nor human  
 She stood on one foot out of respect for him  
 And she did not know what she did or did not.

93 She turned and fell and he spoke about her accident.  
 (244)

She did not move her foot intentionally  
 Nor did she complain of pain in her giddiness  
 I never saw a person with her face before this  
 Do as she did with such determination  
 She did not complain of her injury  
 It pleased her that she saw you smiling.

94 And Badr commanded that she be helped up and she was  
 raised and he spoke. (244)

Possessed of braids that have no fault in them  
 Except they do not play fair with the neck  
 If she flees it is without any prejudice  
 If she visits it is without lustfulness  
 You commanded she be lifted so she parted from us  
 She showed no pain at the misfortune of parting.

95 He spoke to Badr: What have you done by bringing in  
 the maidservant Luba? And he said: I wanted to de-  
 stroy any suspicion of your eloquence. And then Abu  
 Tayyib spoke. (244)

You thought you would cancel suspicion of my art  
 You are greatest of the people of this age  
 For I am the gold well-known whose imprint  
 Increases in minting a dinar to a dinar.

96 And Badr said: No, by Allah a hundred weight of di-  
 nars! And Abu Tayyib spoke. (244)

In the hope of your bounty poverty is driven away  
 Insofar as you are hostile, life ceases  
 The glass boasts when you drink from it  
 The wine chides the one who dislikes it

And you are safe from it while it makes us drunk  
 Until it's as if drunkenness were in awe of you  
 No one has any hopes for liberality  
 Except from Allah and from you O Badr.

97 And he spoke praising Abu Hasan Ali ibn Ahmad al Murri  
 al Khorasani. (245)

No honor for anyone unless he is not oppressed  
 In what is attained or fought for unsleeping  
 It is not constancy when a man has to nurse it  
 It is not purpose when obscurity hinders one  
 Suffering evil and the face of one's oppressor  
 Are a food that make the body grow thin  
 He is base who competes with meanness in his life  
 Many a life makes death easier than this  
 Every clemency that one brings without strength      5  
 Is a pretext that the mean bring forward  
 He who is base finds that scorn is easy to bear  
 There is no pain in wounds for the dead  
 My time hampers the arm so that I am  
 Straightened, but the generous think well of me  
 Standing beneath the foot of my soul's worth  
 With mankind waiting beneath my feet  
 Shall I take pleasure in quiet above the sparks  
 With a goal I covet and my oppressor competing?  
 Until the Hijaz and Nejd are choked with      10  
 Lances and the two Iraqs and Syria  
 As the air is choked with dust as he goes forth  
 The lord of vastness Ali ibn Ahmad?  
 The cultured, educated, the prince, the lean one  
 The sagacious, the subtle, the noble hero  
 He who has the doubts of his time as his prisoners  
 Among those who envy his gifts are the clouds  
 He heals from great wealth by reducing it  
 With generosity, as if wealth were sickness  
 Handsome, but in the eyes of his enemies uglier      15  
 Than his guest which the pasture camel sees  
 If anything could protect a lord from death  
 Majesty and grandeur would protect you  
 Flashings of bared ones whose religion is license  
 But yet their dress is that of the pilgrims  
 There is written on a page of glory: In the name...  
 And then Qais and after Qais...Peace  
 Truly those of Murra ibn Auf ibn Sa'ad  
 Are live coals that ostriches don't relish  
 Their night is their dawn from the fires      20  
 Their dawn from the smoke is longest night  
 Aspirations have informed you of those ranks  
 That imagination falls short of reaching  
 Souls which when they confront the battle  
 Are consumed before the attack is finished

Hearts that have settled down to war  
 As if their attacks were on the right path  
 Leading on every rangy mare and stallion  
 That saddling and bridling wear thin  
 They stumble over the heads just as the 25  
 Stutterer trips over the t's of his speech  
 Your overwhelmings have lengthened misfortune  
 Until the sword tells about you what I say  
 The swords have defended you from men until  
 The pen has defended you from the blades  
 Experience has protected you from opinion until  
 Inspiration has reversed experience  
 A knight who buys a duel with you for honor  
 Is not to be blamed for his sudden death  
 He who receives a glance from you, when poverty 30  
 Drives him to it, has a grace in poverty  
 The best of our parts is our heads but  
 The feet are better still in seeking you  
 Indeed, by my life, I stayed short of you  
 In the push of the crowd and press of gifts  
 I was afraid that if I were at your right hand  
 People would take me for a gift of yours  
 It was guidance I did not visit you when near  
 Visits are recognized when made from afar  
 The delay of your bounty to me was best 35  
 The fastest clouds that come are empty ones  
 Speak, for how many pearls on the string  
 Wish that they were words in your mouth  
 Night and day fear you and if you were to forbid  
 Them, the time would not pass for your sake  
 Allah defends you so you don't stray from truth  
 And so that no crime is directed to you  
 Why are you not cautious as to consequences  
 In things other than vile and what is taboo?  
 How many a friends has no excuse for blame in him 40  
 Yet you can blame him with respect to piety  
 Freedom from blame has raised your worth  
 And weighty business restrained your heart  
 Indeed some poetry is only nonsensical talk  
 Nothing at all, and some of it wisdom  
 Excellence and generosity evoke some of it  
 And some of it lung sickness draws forth.

98 And he spoke also and intended to depart. (251)

Don't disapprove of my parting from you hastily  
 For I have no choice in this departure  
 Often a man parts from his heart's blood  
 On day of battle without words fearing shame  
 I was tested by the envious I fought against  
 So give bounty to some who helped me.

99 He spoke describing his journey to Bawadi and he satisfied Ibn Karawwus al A'ur. (251)

My excuse is from the torments of affairs  
 Which dwell in my breast instead of a tent  
 And from the smiles of battle that are wrung  
 From the swords and not from the lips  
 I went toward them on my feet, girded up  
 And on every camel with restless tether  
 At times my saddle was in the tents of bedouin  
 At times on the thorn tree of the camel  
 I turned my breast to the sharp lance point      5  
 And I set my face to the heat of noon  
 I made journeys through the dark of night alone  
 As if in that I had the light of the moon  
 O speak of the causes that end in nothing  
 Of effort like a pimple on a date pit  
 And of a soul that does not respond to the vile  
 And the eye that does not turn to any equal  
 A hand that won't deprive one coming to me  
 By dispute except for honor and my good  
 But that little help when you passed me by      10  
 With evil from you O evil of the times!  
 Everything was hostile because of you when  
 I fancied depression as my breast boiled  
 If I were envied for something precious  
 I'd be generous with it as a snare to fortune  
 But not if I were envied for my life  
 For there is no good in life without joy  
 So O Ibn Karawwus O half dim-sighted one  
 Even if you were honorable yet O half-seeing  
 You hate us because we do not stammer, are      15  
 Furious with us because we are not one-eyed  
 If you were a man to be mocked we would mock  
 But lukewarmness for it hinders the trip.

100 He spoke praising Muhammad ibn Ubaid Allah ibn Muhammad al Katib al Qadi al Khasib. (253)

The best of men are targets for these times  
 One free of care makes them free of wit  
 We are among a generation who are one and all  
 Evil to a noble soul as sickness to a body  
 Round about me in every place there are faces  
 You'd be wrong if you asked them: Who are you?  
 I never ask hospitality in a place without fear  
 Nor pass among men without being hated  
 I have not associated with one of their kings      5  
 Not deserving the head struck off like an idol  
 I excuse them while I reprimand them since  
 I upbraid myself about them and acquiesce

The need of the stupid without a mind for culture  
 Is the need of an ass without head for a rope  
 I have been with the beggars of the desert  
 Bare of clothes they were dressed in dirt  
 Desert camel thieves with hungry bellies  
 Lizard eggs are their food at no cost  
 They inquire but I don't give them my story 10  
 The arrow of suspicion does not miss them  
 Many a trait in a companion I imitate for them  
 So it seems we are like in ignorance  
 Many a sentence midway I fear as good Arabic  
 They guide me but I can't attain bad grammar  
 Patience makes easy for me every calamity  
 Will softens the edge of every rough ship  
 What salvation and eminence for one seeking death  
 What a drubbing with blame for the coward  
 Fine clothes do not overawe one who is wronged 15  
 Does a splendid shroud amaze a corpse?  
 By Allah I hope for a thing that is denied me  
 My fate requires its existence and puts me off  
 I praised people and if we live I will compose  
 Qasidas of mares and stallions against them  
 Beneath the dust their rhymes are lean  
 When they are recited they will not enter ears  
 I do not make war defensively behind walls  
 I do not make peace deceitfully with evil  
 The tents of the army are in the plain where heat 20  
 Of noon fuses them with poison of rebellion  
 Noble things destroyed have cast their noble acts  
 On Khasib according to right and the sunna  
 They are in his protection and each time orphans  
 Turn to him, he appears with glory and bounty  
 A judge, when two matters tangle, wisdom  
 Occurs to him to distinguish milk from water  
 Freshness of youth, far from the gray of its night  
 Or turning his eye to excess and sleep  
 His drink is sparing nor does he seek drunkenness 25  
 His eating is to preserve the body not fat  
 A speaker of the truth even if it harms him  
 Uniting the states of thought and expression  
 He decides judgment so the ancients falter  
 Showing justice to those unmindful of wisdom  
 His acts are lineage, if one did not add to them  
 Khasib's grandfather, we know root by branch.  
 Rain cloud, son of the rain cloud who was son  
 Of the rain cloud, son of the rain cloud  
 They are at the origin of the world and its end. 30  
 His fathers were ropes of wisdom among cords  
 It's as if they were born before they were born  
 Their wit existed in days when they were not  
 Always those who walk proudly over their enemies  
 Often praised as more guarded than warriors  
 Joy for those who are awaiting his approach  
 He erases wrinkles from foreheads of people

As if wealth of Abdallah's son were ladled  
 From his two hands in lands of Rome and Yemen  
 We lose by you nothing of the rain except slime  
 Nor yet of the sea except boats and winds  
 Nor yet of the lion except his ugly look  
 Nor of his likeness except what is not good  
 Since you girded yourself in Antakya it is just  
 It's as if those who feud were at peace  
 Since you crossed their mountains they are warned  
 To lie flat with no growth on their tops  
 Your gifts have emptied the markets of craftsmen  
 Your bounty does without work or skill  
 Generosity such as one cannot trust to the times  
 Piety that is not at home in the world  
 This is respect which men have not attained  
 It is control of speech not found among gifts  
 Go and nod at fealty that reveres you among peaks  
 Allah bless the course of spirit on Hadhani.

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101 He spoke lamenting his grandmother on his mother's side. (260)

O I know the fates are not to be praised or blamed  
 Their blows are expected and delays pitiless  
 To something like the youth was, the man returns  
 He ends as he began and sleeps as he awoke  
 Allah for you! she was unfortunate in her lover  
 A murder of love without stain clinging to her  
 I long for the cup from which she drank  
 I love her dusty grave and what it holds  
 I wept for her in fear during her lifetime  
 Both tasted loss of his friend beforehand  
 And if lovers' parting has killed them all  
 Gone is a town surviving the flight it suffered  
 I knew the nights before they did this to us  
 They overtook me but added none of their lore  
 Her profit did not hinder the profit of others  
 She fed and poured lest one hunger or thirst  
 My letter came to her after despair and grief  
 She died in joy of me and I died wanting her  
 Joy is forbidden to my heart, for I indeed  
 Count what died there as poison after her  
 She wondered at my script and words as if she  
 Saw in letters of the lines speckled ravens  
 She kissed it until its ink was becoming  
 The black on her eye sockets and her teeth  
 The flow of her tears was thin, her eyelids dry  
 And my love left her heart after it bled  
 Nothing except death consoled her, but yet  
 The worst illness is what drives off illness  
 I sought joy for her but she went and it left me  
 She was content I pleased her with a share

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I wanted a cloud to water her grave after  
 I sought the flow of battle and a sharp lance  
 Before death I judged distance a great thing  
 But that became smallest which was great  
 Suppose I took revenge for you on the enemy  
 How could I take revenge for you on a fever?  
 The world hasn't hindered me with any narrowness  
 But a blind eye cannot show you there  
 O grief, shall I not fall prostrate to kiss 20  
 Your head and bosom filled with discretion?  
 And shall I not meet your sweet spirit which  
 Has a body as it were of the strongest musk?  
 Had you not been daughter of a most noble father  
 Your large father would be mother to me as you  
 If the envious rejoiced on the day of her death  
 She bore me to rub their noses in the dirt  
 He was an exile not finding any great but himself  
 And no way to wisdom except in his Creator  
 There was no path except that of the dusty heart 25  
 No finding sustenance except in generosity  
 They say to me in every land: Who are you?  
 What do you want? What I want exceeds naming  
 It's as if their brothers knew that I was  
 Bringing to them an orphan from its home  
 The union of water and fire in my hands is not  
 So hard as that I unite success and reason  
 However I will seek victory with the edge of that  
 Riding with it, in spite of all, at tyranny  
 One makes it on the day of battle a greeting 30  
 Otherwise I am no warrior chief heroic  
 When fear dulls my will for the distant goal  
 The farthest possible is finding no will  
 For I am of those people for whom our souls seem  
 To be scornful of dwelling in flesh and bone  
 Thus am I, O world, if you wish make an end of me  
 But O my soul put me ahead of what it hates  
 May no hour elapse that does not strengthen me  
 May no blood be mine that approaches injustice.

102 Some people started to make much of what he said in  
 the last part of this qasida and he spoke. (264)

They want to magnify my growl in a bit of scorn  
 They should not be envious when a lion roars  
 If they had any hearts they would understand  
 Fear makes them forget that envy is beneath it.

103 He spoke praising the Qadi Abu Fadl Ahmad ibn Abdullah  
 ibn al Hasan of Antakya. (265)

For you O campsite there are camps in the hearts  
 You become waste but they are peopled by you  
 They know this and you do not know it but yet  
 Worthiest of you is a weeper who has reason  
 I am the one whose eye is merchant in mortality  
 So who is the avenger when killer is killed?  
 The camps are empty of the fawn but with it  
 Is a stray ghost from all the weanlings  
 These who make attacks on my heart are timid  
 I love them near to me though they are stingy  
 They shoot at us though they are far away  
 They surprise us though they are unmindful  
 They resist us by their likeness to the wild cows  
 For they are snares without any dust  
 Jousters at breasts of men are the oryx young  
 Bracelets and ankle rings are on the lances  
 The name of the eyecovers is scabbard for them  
 Since they are controllers of the sword's work  
 How many watchings filled you with love, after  
 The guard wondered at us and gossips persisted  
 Short of an embrace, emaciated like vowel points  
 In accusative as a pointer thins and crowds  
 Be gracious and rejoice for matters have an end  
 Always when they have had their beginnings  
 You do not continue as an object of beauty for  
 Youth's shade on you is a shade that ends  
 In pleasure is a moment that passes as if  
 It were a kiss that a departing lover gives  
 Time runs away and there is no perfect pleasure  
 Among those who grow gray nor complete joy  
 Until we come to Abu Badr ibn Abdullah  
 Whose sight is reward and an awesome resting  
 The roads that lead to him are rained upon  
 By his gifts, a shower in every mountain pass  
 Veiled by the tent roof of his reverence  
 It curbs the bridle though the camel is fast  
 In it there is sun and cloud and ocean  
 And wind and the shape of the lions  
 With him is fine gold and culture redeemed  
 And some of the sources of life and death  
 If he did not allow noise of visitors around him  
 Sand grouse would go nightly to him to drink  
 By quick wit he knows what you need before  
 It is shown him and he responds before request  
 Our eyes see him confronting them and they turn  
 Away, but they return when he approaches  
 His words are swords and they are dividers  
 All of the blows have muscle beneath them  
 His generosity puts to flight every other bounty  
 Until it is as if generosity were one family  
 They destroy stench and funeral camel so you see  
 Mother misery and mother stink bereaved  
 Most distinguished of the learned, a tide that  
 Does not end though all tides have shores

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If children in every tribe were pure like him  
 Women would bear without their midwives  
 If embryos would appear as generously as he  
 The bearer would know the male from female  
 The noble Banu Hasan should increase humility! 30  
 As unlikely as the torch is hid in darkness  
 They veil gifts as the raven hides his mounting  
 But it appears and should the rain cloud hide?  
 Nature boasts of them but they do not boast  
 Of that as indication of a noble ancestry  
 Their elders are identical to restraint of soul  
 Their youths to simplicity of izar on a chief  
 O honored one, men make three things of you  
 Wondering at greatness, envying or ignoring it  
 You have risen and after that you do not worry 35  
 If they know if a speaker praises or blames  
 I praised you and if you wish you could say to me:  
 You come short but restraint is a gift to me.  
 Those who are eloquent do not dare to recite  
 Verses here but I am the fiercest lion  
 Not all the men of ignorance's time could attain  
 My poems, nor did Babylon hear my enchantments  
 And when my defects come to you as shortcoming  
 Yet that is a witness for me that I am worthy 40  
 Who secures the wits of small folk who claim  
 That a grocer can appraise a sword for them?  
 O by your truth! and that is the highest of oaths  
 You are truth and other than you is false  
 You are goodness when its goodness comes over you  
 You are water, as washer you wash yourself  
 The tongue never moved in the mouth nor fingers  
 Turned the pen better than in your praise.

104 He spoke praising his brother Abu Sahl Sa'ad ibn  
 Abdullah al Hasan al Antakya al Himsi. (271)

Parting has just taught our eyelids separation  
 That bleeds, and associated the heart with grief  
 I hoped the hour they went for a show of her wrist  
 So the tribe perplexed would stay before going  
 If she appeared to bewilder them shame would draw  
 A curtain to guard their wits from her glance  
 By the camel and its driver and myself! a moon  
 Is panting in the curtains from her motion  
 As for the dress, when one strips its beauty, 5  
 Undressed one clothes her in beauty naked  
 The musk embraces it with the embrace of a lover  
 Until it is wrinkles on the belly wrinkles  
 I was anxious about my tears because of my sight  
 But now after you each dear thing is scorned  
 The clouds bring their watery breasts for you  
 For a beloved there are memories in flashes

When I approached terrors, a heart went with me  
 When I wished solace from you it betrayed  
 I appear and he who thought evil of me bows down      10  
 I do not chide him with forgiveness but scorn  
 And so I was among my people and in my country  
 For what is precious is alien wherever it is  
 I am envious of virtue, a liar about my mark casts  
 Down a hero and meets me when his time comes  
 I'm not thirsty for what does not bruise desire  
 Nor do I reject that which passes as weakness  
 Nor am I happy when others are praised for that  
 Even if you brought me the century full  
 No one ever attracts my camel toward him      15  
 While I stay alive nor while our saddle rocks  
 But if I had been able I would have ridden  
 All mankind as a camel to Sa'id ibn Abdallah  
 For the camel is wiser than the people that I see  
 As blind to what he sees as benevolence  
 It is generosity even if bounty is small for him  
 Bravery even if he is not content as hero  
 It is provision what his hand has gained for us  
 And if he gives some of it he glorifies us  
 Time is easy on the tips of his fingers      20  
 Until they are supposed to be times for time  
 He hurls battles and lances and catastrophes and  
 The sword and the guest's open, glad handshake  
 You imagine from the warmth of heart he is aflame  
 From his kindness and cheer that he is drunk  
 Singing girls trail the skirts of their gowns  
 By his bounty, and the horses wear his halters  
 He gives as a welcome to the clients beforehand  
 As one does good to the thirsty with water  
 Paradise is the reward of the Banu Hasan for they      25  
 In their people are as Adnan's nobility  
 Allah did not cry glory lost in their ancestors  
 And indeed we now see it in them  
 If written to or met or warred on they are found  
 In script and word and battle to be knights  
 As if their tongues in argument were made  
 Like the lance heads on the spears in jousting  
 As if they came to drink death out of thirst  
 Or smell the Khatti lances as sweet herbs  
 Beings, for one whose enmity I desire, the worst      30  
 Enemy, and for one I'm friendly with brothers  
 Natures which if the negroes had they'd change  
 Into thin lips, curly hair, and white skins  
 With souls whose brilliance makes them loved  
 Perforce, even if far from you in hate  
 Whose fathers are unclouded like their foreheads  
 And their mothers, their minds and thoughts  
 O hunter of armies whose flanks are fearful  
 Whereas the lions hunt men one by one  
 As for gifts every hour is time for his giving      35  
 But donors dispense only now and then

You are one who gathers wealth for generous uses  
 Then you accept clients for it as treasurers  
 Responsible to yourself as guardian when alone  
 You do nothing secretly that you do not openly  
 I don't seek increase of what in you is noble  
 I as one who slept would awaken being awake  
 Indeed by such as you I shone with magnanimity  
 With repulse of the hate of days by content  
 You are most far reaching in fame and greatest  
 In power, and highest of them building glory  
 Allah has honored earth with you as its dweller  
 He honored men since he made men like you.

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105 And he spoke praising Abu Ayyub Ahmad ibn Imran. (277)

A herd whose beauties I am forbidden to possess  
 Words are nearby but things are far off  
 It looked down and when I shot my glances  
 At white skin I saw their thinnest tears  
 My groans drive on their camels from behind  
 They fancy my sighs are cries of their driver  
 It is as if they were trees in the desert but yet  
 Trees from which I pick death as their fruit  
 Would you were on no camel; if I were on it  
 The heat of my tears would blot out brands  
 I bore what you have borne from these wild cows  
 And you bore what I have borne of their grief  
 I am madly in love with what is beneath her veil  
 But chaste as to what is beneath her dress  
 Every beauty knows manhood and magnanimity  
 And authority in me as hindrance to them  
 These are three that forbid my pleasure  
 In private life, not the fear of consequences  
 Among things sought, death is what I have come to  
 With firm heart as if I had not come to it  
 Many a horse troop I have left with a horse troop  
 As food for beasts who had been their food  
 I approached them with one nobly marked as if  
 On its forehead was the grace of Banu Imran  
 Confident in horsemanship like the skins on  
 Their backs when a thrust is at their breasts  
 Their ancestors knew them for this as they knew  
 Them, and they were riders of their mothers  
 It's as if these gave birth standing beneath them  
 And as if those were born in their saddles  
 For noble things without their kind of generosity  
 Are like hearts without their inmost cores  
 Such are the conquering souls upon the heights  
 But glory wins them in spite of their passions  
 Their growth which watered mankind was watered  
 By gifts of Abu Ayyub, best of their growth

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There is no wonder in his giving gifts of flocks  
 But rather at their safety in their times  
 Wonderful is his hold upon the reins with fingers      20  
 As their hold upon things is not usual  
 As he passes he spurs among ranks of conscripts  
 Printing mim by the hoofs of his horse  
 He puts lance heads on whatever target he pleases  
 Even up to the holes in the ears  
 Full grown horses fall behind you O Ibn Ayyub  
 Their legs are not of any benefit there  
 The shudders in the bodies of knights due to you  
 Run from the points through the spear shafts  
 No one is favored by you except he knows about      25  
 You, seeing you he does not say: Give.  
 You deceive those who think the Koran a miracle  
 Your chanting of surahs is among the miracles  
 Generosity is clearly apparent in your words  
 The breeding of a horse is clear in its voice  
 Your absence from the place you have is impossible  
 Moons cannot escape from their constellations  
 We do not blame an illness you have; you are a  
 Magnet to men and magnet to their ailments  
 When they are a far journey from you you go ahead      30  
 And meet before their relating their affairs  
 The dwelling of the fever is the body so tell us  
 What is its excuse in leaving its own good?  
 You surprised it by nobility and long was its stay  
 To give hope to the limbs and not to harm them  
 You have lavished all that which your soul loved  
 Until you lavished for this its very health  
 It is the duty of stars to visit you from on high  
 The lions pay a call on you from their lair  
 And jinn from their hiding and the wild beasts      35  
 From deserts and birds from their nests  
 Humanity is noted by us and if it were a qasida  
 You are the unique image in all its verses  
 Among men there are examples whose life passes  
 As their death and death as their life  
 I feared marriage because of such offspring  
 So I left the women with their daughters  
 Today I go back to him who if he possessed  
 The earth he would think it small as a gift  
 A glance at him would be cheap for those who look      40  
 And stubbing his toe is worth a blood price.

106 And he spoke praising Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Amir al Antakya. (284)

I joust with horses whose horsemen are destiny  
 Alone, what do I say? for patience is with me  
 And braver than myself, each day is my security  
 It is not firm if it has no goal for itself

I have wrestled with woes until I left them  
 Saying: Has death died or is fear afraid?  
 And I have gone ahead in a rush as if I had  
 Another soul or had a blood price upon it  
 Let the soul have its way before its departure 5  
 Neighbors whose camp is life must separate  
 Don't think glory is wineskin and singing girl  
 For glory is only a sword and virgin fury  
 And cutting the throats of men and watching  
 Your black dust and the streaming armies and  
 Your leaving in the world an uproar such that  
 The ten fingers of a man must stop his ears  
 If worth hasn't put you above thanks to the vile  
 For a gift, then merit is his who had the gift  
 And he who wastes his time in collecting wealth 10  
 For fear of want is one who collects penury  
 Every mare is for me against the tyrant class  
 Upon her a youth with breast tight in hate  
 With the spear point against them he passes  
 The cup of death where wine is not asked for  
 How many mountains I crossed witnessing that I  
 Was the mountain; seas proving I was the sea  
 Deserts where the place of a camel was our place:  
 Middle of the saddle on the back of a camel 15  
 They trotted with us in the middle of it as if  
 We were on a ball or earth journeyed with us  
 Many a day we joined to night as if there were  
 On the horizon red clothes of its lightning  
 And many a night we joined to the day, as if  
 On darkness' back were dark green clothes  
 Many a shower such that we thought Amir under it  
 Would rise, not dead, or his tomb was a cloud  
 Or the son of his son who lives, Ali ibn Ahmad,  
 Gave there if I hadn't passed empty handed  
 And a cloud whose bounty is like his bounty 20  
 A cloud that has honor over every cloud  
 A youth, no heart holds the desires of his heart  
 If a heart encloses them no breast covers it  
 Goods are of no use if not for his bounty  
 What are brown lances worth without hands?  
 Well joined when al Salt and Amir met there  
 As when Indian sword and conquest conjoin  
 Then they brought him of the broad brow revered  
 You saw few men about him but they were many 25  
 Ransomed by fathers of the men as a noble chief  
 He was the generous tide which has no ebbing  
 I did not stop until love led me to him  
 His fame went along with me in every convoy  
 I thought the story strained before meeting him  
 But when we met the fact made the story small  
 We drove to you through the length of every desert  
 On every fast camel; all she met was a killing  
 When she swells from the sting it makes her happy  
 As if the tick wrapped a gift in her skin

We came to you short of sun and moon in distance  
 Short of you in your state are sun and moon  
 As if you were cool water without which no life  
 With that cool there's no ten day thirst  
 Knowledge and clemency and wit called me to you  
 Words composed and the gift that is prose  
 Almost the lines of what I spoke as verses  
 When written made ink white from their light  
 As if the manings in these eloquent words  
 Were the Thurya stars or your flower nature  
 Their hatred has kept me from power's presence  
 And what vultures ask by way of their skulls  
 I look upon difficulty as finer to see and easier  
 Than sight of a small man trying to be great  
 My tongue and my eyes and heart and my ambition  
 Love those things in you as named and all else  
 Not I alone have spoken these verses entirely  
 My poem has in you a poem existing in itself  
 And what is in it has no brightness of beauty  
 But cheerfulness as it faced toward you came  
 And if you get to heaven I know for sure  
 You have not got the degree proper to you  
 But the days have stopped my reproach as if  
 Their sons were sinful and you their excuse.

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107\* And he spoke praising Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Sayyar  
 ibn Mukarrim al Tamimy. (290)

Various kinds of men are lovers of various types  
 The most defensive are the best in love  
 No peace for me except in the death of the enemy  
 Are there any visits that can heal hearts?  
 The birds stay with them in this story  
 Echoing it with scream and croak  
 They have already taken their blood upon them  
 As dress of mourning but not to tear collars  
 We join their thrusting and struggle until  
 We mingle with their bones our spearheads  
 It is as if our horses from their youth on  
 Were given drinks of milk from their skulls  
 They rush upon them without any fear  
 Trampling with us the brain pans and breasts  
 They tread with fetlocks stained with blood  
 As for youth, battles fling him into battles  
 The violence of pride's flea is not anxious  
 Whether it strikes when it rages or is struck  
 O my determination! this night is long so see  
 If the dawn is afraid of you in making return  
 As if the first light is a lover wanting to visit  
 Fearing the darkness of clouds like a guard  
 As if its stars were gold chains upon it  
 And its feet hobbled with the earth's surface

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As if the air had suffered what I suffered  
 And its blackness became wan from fatigue  
 As if its darkness captivated my wakefulness  
 And did not disappear unless that disappeared  
 I flutter my eyelids in it and it is as if I 15  
 Were counting with them the sins of a century  
 But there is no night so long as that day  
 That is mixed with the stares of the envious  
 And there is no death so hateful as the life  
 Where I see them sharing with me in it  
 I knew the misfortunes of a young man until  
 If one pedigreed them I'd be the genealogist  
 And when the camel finds things scarce we ride  
 The beast calamity to Ibn Abu Sulaiman  
 A beast that does not demean the one on her 20  
 Nor does one desire a convoy with her  
 It grazes on the earth's growths within us  
 Nor have I failed it except by barrenness  
 To the one with a character that my heart adores  
 If it weren't for that I'd sing a love song  
 Every soul puts me in agony for love of that  
 Though one can't compare him to a darling fawn  
 He is the wonder of the times but it is no wonder  
 He comes of a family who get on with wonders  
 An elder in his youth but not an elder 25  
 As they call those who reach gray hair  
 He grows hard and the lions fear his strength  
 He softens and we fear that he will melt  
 More violent than the strong wind in destruction  
 And swifter in giving than its blast  
 They said: He has hit what we are looking at.  
 So I said: You only saw a target close by.  
 But how could he miss the target with his arrow  
 If he does not miss hid things he thinks of?  
 When his quiver is emptied it is clear to us 30  
 Its arrowheads make wounds for its arrowheads  
 He hits with one of them the notch of another  
 If it does not break it splits the shaft  
 Every straight one cannot transgress command  
 Of his, unless we think that it has a mind  
 The drawing of a bowstring makes you see between  
 The bow and its striking the target a flame  
 Are you not a son of those who thrive and rule  
 And do not beget affairs without success?  
 They get what they want by resolution easily 35  
 Their ants hunt the wild beasts by creeping  
 There are no breezes in the gardens but yet  
 Their graves clothe their dust with perfume  
 O you in whom the breath of glory returns  
 And whose times return from trouble renewed  
 Your manager came to me paying compliments to me  
 He recited to me some strange verses  
 Allah rewarded you with a diseased one  
 You sent to the Messiah as a physician

And I have not refused the gifts from you  
 But you have added to them this cultured man  
 May your house never be without the dawns  
 O sun may you never approach the west  
 May there be safety for you from great misfortune  
 As I have immunity through you from blame.

## 107 And he spoke praising him again. (296)

The least of my acts, but not the most, are glory  
 And diligence, whether I attain or not, is joy  
 I will seek my right with my spear and veterans  
 Who seem beardless from long wearing the veil  
 Heavy when they attack, light when called  
 Many when they are violent, few when counted  
 Jousting as if thrusts were not thrusts for them  
 Blows as if fire were cold compared to them  
 So I want there around me on every swift horse  
 Men in whose mouth death seems honey  
 I denounce the little people of these times  
 Their wisemen fools and their resolve weakness  
 Their nobles are dogs and their vision is blind  
 Watchers as cats asleep, their braves monkeys  
 An evil of the world is that a free man sees  
 His enemy as need because of his friendship  
 O harshness of the world why are you neglectful  
 Of the free man who has no adversary?  
 He goes and finds hateful things at his arrival  
 The days and the harsh times torment him  
 In my heart, though I do not tell it, is weariness  
 And I dislike its women though they are friends  
 My two friends among men are grief and tears  
 In loss of one I loved there's no lack of them  
 My tears flood from the eyelids as if my sheaths  
 Were rivers for the eyes of every weeper  
 As for me a sip of water satisfies me altogether  
 I restrain myself as ostrich restrains itself  
 I go as goes the spear point to the target  
 I am hungry as the curly tailed wolf is hungry  
 My soul is too large to reward backbiting  
 Every slander is power to one who is powerless  
 I pity people who are weak and foolish  
 I excuse hate for me since they are opponents  
 He forbids me from anyone except Ibn Muhammad  
 Whose gifts for me make a place all too small  
 They come without being promised but before them  
 His nature without a promise promises them  
 The sword the Indian made went as my friend  
 To the sword which Allah, not the Indian, made  
 When he saw me approaching he moved himself  
 Toward me; a sword whose every side is an edge

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No one before me saw a sea walk toward him  
 Nor lions arising to embrace him as a man  
 As if the strong bow were to submit to him  
 In love, or refuse for other fingers than his  
 Almost he hits the thing before he shoots it  
 And makes possible a return for his arrow shot  
 He hits a thing in the center though narrower 25  
 Than a black hair on the darkest night  
 By my soul he does not make light of deceit  
 Even if the means and ends multiply in him  
 Who is far from him is poor, who is near wealthy  
 His honor is freedom, his wealth service  
 He does a good action of his own accord  
 And denies it to all whom praise condemns  
 He scorns the envious in his thoughts of them  
 As if they were never a part of creation  
 His enemies are sure that he has no baseness 30  
 But yet his hate is fitted to the one who sins  
 And if Sayyar ibn Mukarrim has come to his end  
 Yet you are rosewater when the rose has gone  
 He went and his sons, you have their virtues  
 A thousand when collected is one alone  
 They have handsome faces and generous hands  
 And much wisdom and sharp tongues  
 And green garments and obedient subjects  
 And spears on target and short haired horses  
 While you live they are not dead nor their fathers 35  
 Tamim ibn Murra and Ibn Tabikha Uddu  
 Some of the things that appear, those I note  
 But some that are hid from me are what appear  
 Today there are those who blame me for loving him  
 It is right best beings be loved by the best  
 So he is and they stray from Ali and his ways--  
 People of blame until the generous king dies  
 There is no retreat from eminence in your bounty  
 Nor musk and dew in the dusty tombs.

108 And he said goodbye to two of his friends and spoke impromptu. (303)

But as to parting it is what I am acquainted with  
 My twin if departure were something born  
 Indeed we knew that we would have to submit to it  
 When we knew that we were not immortal  
 When the fine horses of Abu Bahyi carry us  
 From you the best I have ridden does wrong  
 One distinguishes with blame the parting but I  
 Am one who sees in these times no praise.

109 He spoke praising Abu Bakr Ali ibn Sahl al Rudbari

the Katib. (304)

Like my outside is the sheen of my sharp sword  
 A joy to the eye, a tool when warriors clash  
 You think the water a writing in fire's flame  
 The finest script on protective amulets  
 Each time you glance at its color, a wave  
 Forbids the sight as if it were shaken by you  
 Delicate bits of rays that are beautiful  
 Repeating themselves in the straight flow  
 It comes to water so that the edges drink  
 It is compelled to go to the cobbler  
 For the blood does not stick to its edges  
 Nor do affronts to the soul worn thin  
 O you who keep the darkness from me, my pleasure  
 On a day of drinking, my refuge in a desert  
 My Yemeni, who if I were able would have  
 My eye as its scabbard because of its rarity  
 My lightning, when you flash you are my action  
 My cadence, when you clash you are my rhyme  
 I do not wear you thus as ornament, but rather  
 To strike through necks and midriffs  
 And with you to cut through the iron upon them  
 Each of us in his way is victorious this day  
 Unsheathing it is spurring after midnight in Nejd  
 So people of Hijaz clap hands for a shower  
 I longed for something like it and it was as if  
 I sought for Ibn Sahl who was its equal  
 Not every prince comes from the Rudbari  
 Not every thing that flies is a falcon  
 He is a Persian who has a crown of glory  
 He was one of the jewels in Parwiz's time  
 His soul is better than every noble root  
 Even if I traced a father for him to the sun  
 The beauty of high things occupies his heart  
 Apart from beauty of face and buttocks  
 It is as if the jewel, the pearl and ruby  
 Were his words and veins of gold too  
 His enemies gnaw enviously at coals and iron  
 As if they were chewing on the sugar of Ahwaz  
 Eloquence attains for him the difficult with ease  
 And he achieves fullness with conciseness  
 The bearer of war and vengeance for the people  
 And the weight of the debtors and the fainting  
 Why does he not complain and why do they complain?  
 For his, not the complainers, is the trouble  
 O you whose courts are broad yet there is no  
 Lodging for a night for kings who pass by  
 For me with the points of your spears at dawn  
 Are like ends of locust legs about to jump  
 The Rudaini lances swerve away from me until  
 They make loops of letters in the quivering  
 By your noble fathers! there is sympathy,  
 Consolation and strength for the departed

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They left the earth after they had subdued it  
And it ran under them without a spur  
Armies submitted to them and they were respected  
The words of men to them were only a cough  
Many a fine camel after fine camel came to you 30  
In numbers like the grains of sand  
The trip through the waste land arranges them so  
They are like paintings on a garment  
One sees in the flesh of great wealth your acts  
That destroy the strong camels as treasure  
Each time thought grows rich with a promise  
From you, your hands reward with fulfilment  
A royal singer of the verses before him  
Approving a garment in the hands of a seller  
Ours is the speech but he knows the meaning best 35  
He is better guided toward eloquent words  
There are some men permitted around him  
Poets who seem to be buzzing flies  
He thinks that he is wise in this respect  
But he in blindness has thrown away his cane  
Each verse is equal to one who speaks of you  
The mind of the praised is like the praiser's.

110 He spoke satirizing some people. (309)

Has ignorance killed you before your death  
Or the ants run off with you light as straws?  
Little children of Ubayy Tayyib, the dog, why  
Is it you fancy a name when you have no sense?  
Even if my catapult hit you and your foundations  
Were strong you'd break, so what is no basis?  
And if you were of those who manage their affairs  
You'd not be offspring of one who has no son.

111 He spoke praising Husain ibn Ali al Hamadani. (310)

Passion for one whom distance holds possesses me  
O would I had the distance and he the passion  
I rejoice that love renews a memory of the past  
Even if hardest stone could not survive it  
Waking that comes to eyes from you is with us as  
Sleep, bitter herbs your camels graze as roses  
Imagine until it is as if you had not gone  
As if despair of your embrace were a promise  
And until almost you brush away my tears  
And drops of your scent cling to my garments  
When a beauty betrays she is loyal to her pledge  
Part of her vow is a vow not lasting for her  
And if she loves she is violent in passion  
If she is angry, away, her rage has no limit

And if she hates no pleasure remains in her heart  
 If she is happy no hate stays in her breast  
 This is the nature of woman and oftentimes  
 Her direction strays and her guidance is hid  
 But still loving veils the heart in youth  
 Increasing bitter fate and intensifying it  
 May Ibn Ali pour from every cloud that pours  
 Sufficient for her as sufficient for you  
 To water as it waters the lands that you dwell in  
 To make grow there above you honor and glory  
 With one that eyes are raised to on parting day  
 And the cloak is torn from the press of men  
 Fingers cast off their weapons and do not know it  
 Due to much waving at him when he appears  
 Striker at head of the head striker in battle  
 Light when saddle pad is heavy on horse  
 Foresighted at seizing praise in every place  
 Even if the lion hid it between his teeth  
 By hope in him the youth is rich before his gifts  
 And by fear cuts to shreds before the sword  
 My sword! you are sword, not one you unsheathe  
 For blows and a sword's metal is your sheath  
 By my spear! you are the lance, not one you wet  
 With blood; without a flint no spark spouts  
 They are ones to share thanks between them and me  
 For they are benefited insofar as they benefit  
 My thanks to them is double, thanks for gifts  
 And thanks for thanks which they give later  
 Their horses are standing at the doors of tents  
 And their images run in hearts that fear them  
 Spendthrift of themselves for their deputies  
 Their wealth at home envoy for those not sent  
 It's as if the gifts of Husain were armies  
 And among them are slaves and perfect horses  
 I see a moon, son of the sun, wearing eminence  
 Go slowly until the cheeks wear their beard  
 He expands the size of the armor at its joints  
 Over a body whose cut is cut of spear shaft  
 He gave good news of virgin generosity beardless  
 His fathers were thus and they were beardless  
 I praised his father before him and he healed  
 My hand of emptiness as sick eyes are healed  
 He gave me eight fast coursers before which was  
 Fear of my going as they entice to distance  
 But desire to return was bounty of his right hand  
 Double, double though generosity was unique  
 I did not cease to cast down those envious of that  
 In their hands was rage and in my hands gifts  
 I had the Coptic robe of a prince and his wealth  
 And they had disbelief which I had overcome  
 They aim at the goal of speech, nevertheless  
 A monkey only apes a man in what is senseless  
 For they are in a company the crow could not see  
 They make noise the mole cannot hear

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Men think to ransom every strange word of mine 35  
 So they pay by not blaming if it is not praise  
 I have found Ali and his son the best of people  
 Best people even if free and slave are equal  
 My poem becomes theirs in its setting  
 On a neck of beauty with necklace adorned.

112 He spoke praising Abu Muhammad al Hasan bin Abdullah  
 ibn Tughj. (315)

I'm my own accuser, if I were in a mood for blame  
 I'd know what's wrong with me in these traces  
 But I am one of those perplexed, enslaved  
 As a river, and my heart unveiled as a secret  
 We stopped as if all the passion of our hearts  
 Had made stubborn the legs of our camels  
 We trod with the soles of the beasts its dust  
 I sought for healing from the kiss of the hoof  
 The camps which are their homes are defended 5  
 By long lances, not guarded by amulets  
 Adorable, the brocade imprints its likeness  
 When they sway there is grace in their bodies  
 Their smiles show pearls like those in necklaces  
 As if their breasts were adorned with teeth  
 Common to me and the world? my goals are its stars  
 And my course to them is through snakes' jaws  
 It is reason that you employ ignorance against it  
 When the ways of evil are broad with reason  
 And if you desire water half of which is blood 10  
 Drink where he won't drink who won't strive  
 He who knows the days with my knowledge of them  
 Among men will water his lance without pity  
 For there is no pity when they overcome him  
 Nor any evil for them in an unjust death  
 If I attack I don't leave counterblows to the bold  
 If I speak I do not leave a word to the wise  
 Otherwise may the rhymes betray men, and weakness  
 Of determination hinder me from Ibn Abdullah  
 From one who gains his legacy to lavish as legacy 15  
 And puts aside greed as with a sacred taboo  
 His enemies desire the place of his clients  
 And the weighty clouds envy his two hands  
 He does not meet a battle except with a heart  
 Magnified with munitions for greatness  
 Possessed of uproar there are no birds in front  
 To snatch, nor beasts stirred up by surrender  
 The sun passes over it but she is blinded  
 She rises between feathers of great vultures  
 When rays strike between the wings of the birds 20  
 They whirl above the helmets like dirhams  
 Thunder hides from you and lightning is above it  
 From a flashing on its borders and an uproar

I see there between the Forat and the waste land  
 The attack that leads horses over skulls  
 The jousting of a chief when he restrains them  
 They know Rudaini lances before their toys  
 They protect him from the enemy on every side  
 Swords of the Banu Tughj ibn Juff the prince  
 They do well in renewed attacks in thick of battle 25  
 Better than that their returns to bounty  
 They do best in the forgiveness of every sin  
 And are angry at the debts of every debtor  
 They are modest, except in their onslaughts they  
 Are less modest than the edges of the sword  
 But for my scorn of lions I would compare you  
 And after all they are counted among beasts  
 Sleep has left me because of my travels to him  
 Whose good deeds travel to every sleeper  
 By freeing prisoners and destroying the enemy  
 Rescuing those who wail and are held in dust 30  
 Nobly I shook off men when I reached him  
 As if they were dry leaves among fresh fruit  
 Almost my happiness did not exceed my regret  
 For absence from him in my life that is past  
 I left the evil of the earth, people and dirt  
 Alids there, whose ancestor was not Hashim  
 Allah beset envy of the Emir with his mercy  
 And set him among them in place of a turban  
 For in swift death there would be peace for them 35  
 In life they had only a throat slashing  
 As if you didn't subdue one whose bounty was plain  
 To you, and did not kill those who withstood.

113 Abu Muhammad asked him to drink wine and he refused  
 so he said: By my soul! Take it. (320)

Your words were: Pour me the wine. By my soul!  
 But love for me doesn't mix with insincerity  
 If you swore by the right hand and if you insisted  
 On my death with it I'd strike off my own head.

114 Then he took the cup and said. (320)

You greet with an oath and I ransom one who swears  
 Mankind exists for his glorious greatness  
 So I seek the pleasure of the Emir by drinking it  
 And I take it and abandon the taboo.

115 Someone sang a song and he said speaking to Abu  
 Muhammad. (320)

What is it that he who sings is saying  
 O best of those who are under this heaven?  
 You turn my heart with the glance of an eye  
 To you, away from the beauty of this song.

116 And he offered him a sword and he showed it to some  
 who were present. (320)

I see the astonishing thin edges of the smiths  
 And they are what suit every proud youth  
 If you grant it to me with you as previous owner  
 I will test it for you with this youth.

117 And he intended to depart and he said. (320)

Night strives strong with me competing for you  
 My departure is the sharpest weapon for it  
 Because each time I depart, my sight  
 Finds distance between my eyelids and dawn.

118 He traveled at night and he did not know where he was  
 when he entered a garden and spoke. (321)

Many a visit which was not promised  
 Is like a sleep to eyelids awake  
 The horses ambled with us here  
 With the Prince Abu Muhammad  
 Until we entered this garden  
 Would that its dwellers were immortal  
 Both green and red is the earth  
 As if it were on the cheek of youth  
 I wanted some comparison for it  
 But I found nothing that existed  
 And then you had recourse to reality  
 Solitude for the one who is unique.

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119 And he spoke about him also. (321)

Many a moment is an age for me with the only one  
 He outweighs his people with me and much more  
 I drink from the beautiful light of his brow  
 And blossoms you see in water murmuring there  
 People make him their model and I do not omit it  
 My times in his court become immortal.

120 He spoke describing courtiers who were approaching like a herd of buffaloes and were far gone in drunkenness. (322)

Two courtiers with difference between them  
 Are opposed, though of fine culture  
 When you go up to one the other turns in fear  
 If you go to the other that one turns  
 Why does he fear you who knows not he withdraws?  
 But I make them see wonder in their actions.

121 And the night approached and they were in the garden and he said. (322)

The day ends but the light from you reminds us  
 It does not end if night's wing is clipped  
 And if a desire for a garden were to hold us  
 Then peace, for every place with you is garden.

122 There was repeated drinking when the incense was thick and the scent of ambergris arose in the assembly and he spoke. (322)

O fume of sandalwood and face of the prince  
 Beauty of a singer and purity of wine  
 Cure my drunkenness by my drinking of them  
 For I am drunk with the drink of happiness.

123 When he left the garden he looked at the clouds and said. (323)

A cloud appeared before me and we were returning  
 So I said: Be off! There is a cloud with me.  
 Look at the tent of the king who is our hope  
 And hold off until he decides to pour out.

124 And Tahir the Alid referred to his steadfastness and Abu Muhammad was present so he said. (323)

Is it goodness which I have done without  
 That is supplied by nearness to the Prince?  
 Our exalted Lord has set me up with him  
 Just as He will forgive those sins of yours.

125 And Abu Muhammad started to shake incense from his sleeve and sprinkle it over him and he spoke. (323)

O most generous of men in action  
Most eloquent of men in speech  
If you spoke in this scattered incense  
Then you spoke this way in bounty.

126 Abu Muhammad told of their journey at night on a desert raid and that the rain overtook them and he spoke. (323)

Courage does not ask in vain of you  
So whose story and information?  
We knew before that you were one whom  
Neither night nor rain could forbid his wish.

127 And he spoke also and he was with Tahir the Alid.  
(323)

You have achieved what you desired of virtue  
And true is that nobility of yours  
If you do not travel to your home now  
I fear that it will journey to you.

128 And he wanted to arise but he was made to sit and he spoke. (323)

O you in whom I see clemency as baseness  
And the freedom of a king as slavery  
The drinking leans heavy on me  
And you are guided to generosity  
If you will favor me with my dismissal  
I will count it a kindness on your part.

129 Abu Muhammad remembered that his father had once become lightheaded and that a Jew had recognized him and he spoke. (323)

Don't blame the Jew because  
He saw the sun and did not deny it  
Because blame on its own account is  
Darkness after which one cannot see.

130 He was asked improtu for some verses and he responded and they were amazed at his memory and he said.  
(324)

But I hold the object of praise in my eye  
Not in memory when I look at the Emir  
Many qualities when I look at them  
Compose themselves into rare embroidery.

131 He spoke and a companion had related to him, that is, Abu Muhammad ibn Ubaid Allah, concerning warriors that frightened him, their work and their appearance.  
(324)

O bringer to life of every difficult generous act  
And rider of every swift strong horse  
And thruster in every broad bloody wound  
And opponent of every slanderer of sincerity  
May Allah bless me before the day of death with  
Blood of an enemy from the depth of a wound.

132 And he sent out a falcon for quail and he took one and he said. (324)

Have you found the meaning of everything  
And outdistanced the world for every goal?  
What have you left for him who has not ruled?  
What have you left for him who has ruled?  
It is as if the quail, when it saw you  
Pursuing it, wanted to be pursued.

133 Abu Muhammad crossed some mountains and the slaves tracked a deer and the dogs brought it to bay and Abu Tayyib spoke. (324)

There is many a peak on this long mountain  
Remote, like a curve of a sick camel's neck  
One goes through narrow ways and rocks  
As if the middle of the road is knotted rope  
We visited it for affairs it was not used to  
For hunting and pleasure and play  
With every shedder of the black blood  
Trained with the leash and the collar  
With all the sharpened curved teeth  
Like files on two edges of a mouth  
A seeker of revenge even if he doesn't hate  
He kills what he kills without quarter

He pursues a gazelle and does not lose it  
 It starts from greenery wet with dew  
 Like growth of beard on hairless cheek  
 Nor can it wish to follow anything but death  
 Nor can it fall except within the claws 10  
 It does not leave any plunder to the poet  
 Describing it to the glorious prince  
 The king Abu Muhammad, chief of the tribe  
 Hunter of warriors with Indian sword  
 With bright graces which appear and recur  
 If I want their number I can't count them  
 If I think of his bounty I can't exhaust it.

134 He wanted to say something fine about the eye of a falcon in the assembly and he said. (326)

O how shall I prettify them as eyes  
 If only the beauty were not surprising  
 Yellow as the spicy saffron  
 A small black center grape of nightshade  
 When the falcon looks to his side  
 It dresses his shoulder with a ray of light.

135 He chided him for leaving off praising him and he said. (326)

Abandoning your praise is like satire on myself  
 If the praise for you is short it is much  
 Not that I have left off cuttings of verse  
 In affairs such as mine there are excuses  
 Your character is your praise, not my words  
 And bounty is envied by my phrases  
 Allah bless him who makes gifts by your hands  
 But I pour out drink for you O prince.

136 He spoke in farewell to him. (327)

This farewell is not the farewell of a sad lover  
 This parting is parting of soul from body  
 As for the cloud, the wind drives it high  
 May it not come near Ramla, the gem of cities  
 O parting from the prince whose mansion is broad  
 If you part us today may you not do so again.

137 He spoke praising Abu'l Qasim ibn Tahir the Alid.  
 (327)

Bring back my morning for it is with the virgins  
 Restore my sleep for it is a vision of my love  
 For my day is a night that is intensely dark  
 To eyes that, due to your loss, are weak  
 To the distance between eyelids it is as if  
 You hooked each eyelash and to the eye hollow  
 I think that if I had wanted a parting with you  
 I'd be dead, for time is the foulest friend  
 O would that what is between me and my lovers  
 In distance were between me and misfortune 5  
 You thought the thread was my body so you kept it  
 From you by a pearl lest it touch a breastbone  
 If I were thrown in the cut of a pen's tip  
 By illness I'd not alter a stroke of a writer  
 She scares me with less than she asks  
 She doesn't know shame as the worst of ends  
 No avoiding a day bright as a horse with white legs  
 After which the wailing is heard for long  
 Easy for one such as I when he aims at a goal 10  
 The clash of spears before it and of swords  
 Much life for a man is like a little of it  
 It ends and life's scrap is as what is gone  
 Be off woman for I am not one who when on guard  
 Against snake bite sleeps on top of scorpions  
 Threats of claimants reached me and that they  
 Have brought for me Sudanese to Kafr Aqib  
 If they spoke true of their kin I'd be warned  
 But are their words about me alone not lies?  
 By my life! the goal of every surprise is me 15  
 As if I were amazement in the eyes of wonder  
 In what land have I not trailed my flowing locks  
 And what place have my camels not trampled?  
 As if my ready camel was the hand of Tahir  
 And my saddle was fixed on the back of gifts  
 No creature lives who has not come to his court  
 They are drink to him in coming to the pool  
 A youth whose soul and ancestors teach him  
 Beating the enemy and scattering huge gifts  
 Indeed he draws courtiers from every homestead 20  
 And sends back to his homeland every exile  
 So are the Fatimids: the bounty of their fingers  
 Is harder to erase than lines in finger joints  
 Men who when they meet the enemy it seems that  
 Weapons they confront are only dust of horses  
 They toss their forelocks as from bows and come  
 With bloody necks but with flanks unharmed  
 They are the ones sweeter than life renewed  
 More often remembered than the times of youth  
 You have aided Ali, O son of him, with scimitars  
 Of action, no bluntness for them in striking  
 Brightest of the signs of the Tihani is that he 25  
 Was your father and the richest of your merits  
 When a soul of lineage is not like its stock  
 What use then is that precious thing pedigree?

Comparisons of dissimilar people never approach  
 Comparison of similar people never is distant  
 If an Alawi should not happen to be like Tahir  
     He is nothing but argument for the Nasibis  
 They say there is influence of the stars on men      30  
     What then of his influence on the stars?  
 He rises on shoulders of the world to every goal  
     It has the gait of one obedient to its rider  
 It is right that he outdistances men while he sits  
     And reaches unseeking what they do not reach  
 He makes shoes of the noses of kings and they are  
     Ones who on his feet find their highest degree  
 A gift of the times, this union between him and me,  
     A separation by him between me and misfortune  
 Son of the Messenger of Allah, son of his executor      35  
     A comparison with them I compared with fact  
 He knows what is exposed in you to the attacker  
     Is no worse than that exposed to backbiters  
 But O wealth which has already been destroyed  
     Take courage, for it is his way with armies  
 Perhaps at some time you distracted his heart  
     From generosity or increased the army at war  
 I have brought him with my tongue a garden that  
     My wit has watered as cloud water on meadows  
 So may you be greeted by best son of best father      40  
     Of the noblest house of Lu'ay ibn Ghalib.

138 And Abu Tayyib spoke describing his horse thinking  
about the shortage of fodder for him. (334)

Nothing in fields that is green nor on trees  
     Their herbage complains of much harshness  
 The snow has stayed there like a comrade  
     Freezing on the teeth the film of saliva  
 Then it left not to return after its parting  
     With captains in its thaw and followers  
 It's as if Tochur was seeking a fugitive  
     He eats the grass that is short and close  
 Like your peelings of ink from the paper      5  
     I seek it like a falcon for him  
 Right leg different in color, long of crest  
     Thick muscle around the buttocks  
 With a broad breast and a noble character  
     Having wide nostrils and lean flanks  
 With white legs, large bodied and strong  
     Ample his blaze like the rising sun  
 As if it from its color were in lightning  
     Hovering over dust and desert rock  
     Cool of morn and even and hottest noon  
 For the horseman riding it steadily      10  
     Fear of a coward in the heart of a lover  
     As if he were on the side of a high mountain

He is ahead of the speaker's sound in an ear  
 If he outdistances the sun in eastern lands  
 He comes to the west with the gait of a winner  
 He leaves on the stones of the sandy hill 15  
 The imprint of gems taken from a belt  
 As he trots and if he runs it is a trench  
 If they come to sip from a faithful cloud  
 It is enough for a five day camel  
 When the bridle comes to him on the night road  
 He opens his mouth as the croaking raven  
 As if the hide on the bare face bones  
 Stretched from the curve of a crossbow  
 He in his first hair outstrips a full-grown horse 20  
 His legs faster than those of an ostrich  
 His hoofs strike louder than the thunderclap  
 His ears are more sensitive than a rabbit's  
 He is more alert to danger than the raven  
 He distinguishes between a jest and reality  
 He it is who warns the rider of every thief  
 He seems to you stupid but is cleverness itself  
 He grooms himself at will like a falcon preening  
 Derived from a fine mother and fine father  
 Among the noblest of stallions and of mares 25  
 His neck has grown like a palm tree  
 His throat can be held by a strangler's hand  
 He counts in the thrusting for a battalion  
 And a blow in the face or point of separation  
 And running in the shadow of fluttering flags  
 He bears me and the blade with the double edge  
 It drips on the armor down to the shirt  
 I do not see the world with the eye of a lover  
 And I do not bother with a small success  
 You strike down every envious hypocrite 30  
 You are ours and all of us are the Creator's.

139 And he spoke when Antakya was besieged and the colt  
and al Hijr were killed so he spoke. (338)

When you strive madly for some high goal  
 Be not content with what is short of stars  
 For the taste of death in unimportant things  
 Is like the taste of death in great things  
 You will weep for grief of my mare and my colt  
 Swords whose tears are the moisture of bodies  
 They approached the fire and then grew in it  
 As the virgins grow in tranquillity  
 They departed perfect from the sword polishers  
 And their hands had many a wound 5  
 The coward thinks that weakness is reasonable  
 But this is a trick of a sordid nature  
 Every brave act for a man is worthwhile  
 There is nothing like bravery for a wise man

How many who complain of a true saying  
 But the lack is in the sick mind!  
 For the ears seize on that which  
 Is according to nature and knowledge.

140 He spoke mocking Ishaq ibn Ibrahim ibn Kaigalag. (339)

Heart's love has joy that one cannot understand  
 Suddenly I looked for I thought I was safe  
 O sister of knights who are earnest in battle  
 Where brother is softer, more pitiful than you  
 He looks long at you with modesty for he knows  
 Magians perished by what they thought good  
 Elegant whiteness in my sideburns delights you  
 If it were natural, black would be a delight  
 If it were possible for me I would unveil youth 5  
 For gray hairs before their time are a veil  
 Indeed I have seen misfortune but I have not seen  
 Snowy hair die nor yet black hair protected  
 Desire weakens the lusty with emaciation  
 Whitens the forelock of youth and he ages  
 Rational man's bliss is unhappy due to his reason  
 And foolish man rejoices in misery  
 Men have cast off restraint, and the one set free  
 Forgets a friend and regrets a pardon  
 Let not the tears of an enemy deceive you 10  
 Pity your youth from an enemy you pity  
 One whose noble nature is high yields not to evil  
 Until the blood drips from its sides  
 The little bit of vileness harms by its nature  
 One who is not small, as it is small and base  
 Wrong is of the nature of souls and if you find  
 One pure, it is by weakness he does no wrong  
 Ibn Kaigalag forbids the road as does his wife  
 The biggest road is that between her legs  
 Set an armed guard over a vulva that seems calm 15  
 For death in her womb is a huge sea  
 Be gentle to yourself for your nature is waning  
 Conceal your father for your root is evil  
 Your wealth is questionable, your levity farting  
 Your pleasure a penis your master a dirham  
 Beware of the hostility of men, for you  
 Are hard on a slave's cock and you dare  
 Slander from those who have no respect is a trial  
 In error, and plea from ones who know nothing  
 He walks on all fours toward the rear 20  
 Among unbelievers bridled from behind  
 His eyelids are never quiet as if they were  
 Watering, or unripe fruit was crushed in them  
 And when gestures of his tell a story it's as if  
 A monkey chattered or an old woman slapped

The back of his head hates the motion of a hand  
 Until he almost wears turbans because of fists  
 He seems smaller when you see him talk  
 More than ever false when swearing an oath  
 Baseness shows itself by baseness in loving 25  
 More lovable than he for a lover is a viper  
 It is only enmity which his benefit gains you  
 And his friendship only bothers and does harm  
 You sent to ask me for a praise poem foolishly  
 Safra more urgent than you, what resolve!  
 Don't you see guidance earned by others than you  
 O son of little one-eye which favors you  
 How shockingly you exceeded your power to ascend  
 How terribly the stars came close to you  
 You sought what belonged to Abu Ashar alone 30  
 Praise is for one visited and gracious  
 And for one at whose gate you were put down  
 You approach, one hits your neck and rebukes  
 For one who scorns wealth and he is generosity  
 For one who heads armies and vast ones  
 And for him who when the warriors meet in battle  
 Has his portion of that as the master warrior  
 And often he turns the lance against the knights  
 It bends and then stands firm behind them  
 His face is shining and his heart audacious 35  
 His lance brown and his sword not dull  
 The deeds of one who is nobly born are noble  
 The deeds of a stranger born are barbarian.

141 The news came to him that Ibn Kaigalag had threatened him and he spoke. (345)

The word of ignorant Ibn Kaigalag has come to me  
 It crossed rough and smooth between us  
 If there were not between the son of Safra and me  
 A bar other than my lance it is long enough  
 And Ishaq feels safe from one who scorns him  
 Yet he amuses himself with weeping a bit  
 His face is not beautiful so he protects it  
 He'd not be pretty even if it were beautiful  
 He lies when he says I humiliated him with satire  
 Indeed he was base before this mockery.

142 The news came that two slaves of Ibn Kaigalag had killed him and he said. (345)

They said to us: Ishaq is dead. So I said to them:  
 This medicine cures him of foolishness  
 If he died he died without loss or grief  
 If he lived he lived without good or grace

From him the slave learned to split his skull  
 To betray friend and hide fraud in flattery  
 Not faithful to the oath of a friend's right hand  
 Cast off like spear points one after another  
 I never knew him other than monkey without tail 5  
 A zero of wretchedness filled with temper  
 Falling like a feather in the gusts of the wind  
 Never stable in the condition of turmoil  
 A hand can engulf his temples and his shoulders  
 And clothe him with a garment of sweaty wind.  
 They asked those who killed him what death they  
 Chose for him: Beating or death by fright?  
 Was there place for a sword's edge for a fellow  
 Who was without any body or head on neck?  
 Except for the vile ones and some of his likes 10  
 He's the ugliest brat ever wrapped in rags  
 Most of the words one hears and his face  
 Are such as split the ears and the sight.

143 And he stayed with Ali ibn Askar at Baalbek who  
 treated him well and he spoke excusing himself. (346)

Pour out for us O Ibn Askar, magnanimous man  
 Do not stop your bounty to us who thirst  
 It would be better not to make gifts to us  
 Your farewell and goodbye was without rancor  
 We will not worry about your impending loss  
 Nor condemn those large favors of yours  
 But yet the shower when it comes near  
 To the earth of a traveler rejects the cloud.

144 And he spoke in a qasida which he composed in his  
 youth. (347)

The sword of removal is on the top of his neck...  
 Not the shaking it against a limb to cut it off  
 Rather protection with a shield of patience  
 This time blames him because of his admirers  
 As it blames its moon to praise him I praise  
 He is a sun and when the sun meets him a horse  
 Its lights come and go in it as he does  
 Beauty is never ugly except when he appears 5  
 Nor slave low except before him as lord  
 She said: As for gifts, help yourself. So I said:  
 A free man won't return until after drinking  
 I could not know the good until I knew the youth  
 Generosity wasn't born except at his birth  
 A soul belittles the soul of the age by greatness  
 Its mature wisdom is in its beardless years.

145 He spoke praising Abu Ashar al Husain ibn Hamadan.  
(348)

Do you think that she because of the many lovers  
Reckons that tears are natural to the eyes?  
How can she weep who thinks that every eye  
    But her own eye sees her with tears undried?  
You were of us in seducing yourself but yet  
    You kept free from emaciation and grief  
You forbade the visit so now if you made a visit  
    This emaciation would forbid the embrace  
The glance that you kept fixed and that we fixed  
    Was intended by us but death intervened  
If the distance apart from your fleeing left you  
    The fast gait would melt the fat of the camel  
We would travel and if we arrived with her  
    I'd be like our souls were at last breath  
What is there for us in love of eyes whose  
    Eyelash color is the color of the pupils?  
They shorten the time of the nights that are past  
    And lengthen the nights that yet remain  
They increase the gifts of the prince of wealth  
    Insofar as they bring the hunter's empty bag  
There is no creature other than Abu Ashar  
    Who deserves to rule over these men  
A joustier with thrusts that pierce an army corps  
    With terror and blood that is poured forth  
Endowed with a flood as if it were within  
    He hears of it as he looks down perforce  
One who strikes off heads in the dust and does not  
    Have fear lest he drink what he pours out  
On a mare that is ecstasy for a stallion  
    Between her pasterns and the inner skin  
No disbeliever of the prophet sees her without  
    He finds true words in Buraq's description  
His purpose is those who hold lances, not them  
    Their points like a waistband around him  
Penetrating of intellect and firm in clemency  
    A man has no power over him through fear  
O Banu al Harith ibn Luqman let not those backs  
    Of fine horses be lacking to you in battle  
They send terror into the hearts of the enemy  
    It's as if death comes before the attack  
Almost when they make use of the blade it  
    Makes a sheath for itself in the neck  
And when the horsemen tremble from the shock  
    Of attack they tremble because of horror  
Every brave man increases his beauty in death  
    Like a moon in its fullness moves to the dark  
He is one who makes his armor of death itself  
    If there is no shelter from shame short of it  
A generosity that is rough on the side of them  
    It is like water to polish the thin edges

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As to the heights when others claim them  
 Betrayal of the theft is unavoidable  
 O son of those who when you appeared to me were  
 Though absent in person, present in character  
 Even if you disguise yourself in attacks on men  
 They swear you are his son without a doubt  
 How shall the arm be strong for your hand  
 When the world in it is a hand in the world?  
 There is little use for steel for you because 30  
 None meets you but he whose sword is hypocrisy  
 The companion of this breath makes more impression  
 On the soul because death has a bitter taste  
 And grief before the soul departs is weakness  
 For there is no grief after departure  
 How much wealth relieved with the lance  
 That was in chains to stingy people!  
 Riches in the hand of a base man are ugly  
 As the bane of the generous is in poverty  
 My words of your sunny acts are not like a sun 35  
 But rather like the dawning of that sun  
 Poet of glory whose friend is the poet of words  
 Both of us masters of the finest meanings  
 You do not cease to listen to the praises but yet  
 The whinny of the fine horse is not a heehaw  
 Would I had something like luck of these times  
 Among ages or its provision among provisions  
 You are of it and every time was longing  
 For some of this eminence of creation.

146 And he came to him one day and he was drinking and before him was a pumpkin spiced with saffron in a covered basket on top of which was ambergris surrounded with a ring of pearls. So he greeted him and said: What would you compare this to? So he spoke. (354)

But a construction of bamboo conceals  
 The pumpkin tended by hand over a fire  
 The prince made a necklace of pearls for it  
 Which are like his acts and words as witnesses  
 Like a cup which the mixing controls by showing  
 Some foam that circulates with the dark drink.

147 And he spoke also about it. (354)

It's a black girl with a string of pearls on her  
 It has the shape of squash but is ambergris  
 As if there were a bit of saffron on her head  
 The dawning light of grey in kinky hair.

148 And he spoke also about it. (355)

I have neither wine nor melon for myself  
 Black in its rind of bamboo  
 I keep from it and from others like it  
 It subdues the soul for jousting day  
 Every wide thrust has sticky on it  
 Tingeing what is between hand and spear head.

149 And he spoke also praising Abu Ashar al Husain ibn Ali ibn Hamdan. (355)

I spent the night in Damascus on a mattress  
 Whose stuffing had for me heat of my heart  
 Tossed by night in color like the eye of a fawn  
 And by desire like wine in the bones  
 And by love that is burning in the heart  
 Like coals in the ribs that seem to flame  
 May the blood flow over every blade not dulled  
 And pour from every lance not enfeebled  
 For the knight is far-famed and the horsemen  
 Fly from his sword like feathers 5  
 Indeed he is called the father of fierceness  
 As if Abu Ashar were not obvious  
 And al Husain is forgotten while he is named:  
 Death to heroes or shower to the thirsty!  
 They meet him unarmored in an armor of blows  
 Fine of weave with border flame tested  
 As if there were a fire from it on the skulls  
 And hands of the people were wings of moths  
 As if the flow of the heart's blood were water  
 From thirst the sword has become used to it 10  
 They have fled among those whose souls are gone  
 Those at last gasp and those with reason lost  
 Dust flecked by the edge of the sword in whom is  
 Concealment of a lizard who fears the hunter  
 The front legs of the horses bloodied each other  
 And what was on ankles came to the upper leg  
 He who is their fear is unique, they do not fear  
 His distant army, nor he who seeks an army  
 As if the quivering of the arrow in him 15  
 Were a trembling of palm leaf on a thin stem  
 The plunder of souls of warlike men is more worthy  
 Of men of glory than the plunder of property  
 The big bellied ones share with us in drinking  
 When we attack but they do not share defense  
 Before the growth of horn and before maturity  
 The sheep is known from the ram for you  
 O ocean among the seas, I cannot hide it  
 O full moon among full moons, I exclude none  
 It's as if you had insight into all hearts  
 Nor are camps of those who seek hid from you 20

Shall I keep away if you are stingy with nothing  
 And do not accept words of gossips about me?  
 But why...? for you among the princes for me  
     Are noblest of birds and not of little ones  
 One does not fear you with false expectation  
     Nor does one hope in you with delusive fears  
 You are in all of the horsemen who joust  
     Even if they were Iraqi peasants on young asses  
 I see men as darkness and you as the light      25  
     I among them travel all night to dawn  
 With them I suffered the grief of a rose in front  
     Of the noses fitted with the bit of wood  
 They are against you as you grow thin with nights  
     Around you, when you grow fat in the uproar  
 News of the prince comes; one says: They attack!  
     Then I said: Yes, they have reached Shawshi.  
 Never turning back he leads them on to the battle  
     His battles reach old age, attacks grow gray  
 The dark bay horse is saddled and carries me      30  
     On its straining belly and its fastest pace  
 One of the ungovernable ones who is protected  
     With my lance in every bit of flying blood  
 If it is hamstrung it is reported for me to him  
     The news is carried on every trotter  
 When his station is observed by a barefoot one  
     Thorn stung, he won't flinch as it's pulled  
 He makes an end to fear of being taken prisoner  
     And diverts from boasting because of glory  
 No lover is found with the like of my passion      35  
     No eagerness is known like my eagerness  
 I traveled to you in search of high things  
     And others beside me went in search of life.

150 And he sent out a falcon for a partridge and he took it so Abu Tayyib spoke. (361)

There's many a bird that death follows  
     With whirring wings on its trail  
 As if its feathers were on arrows  
     With a body as bulky as the wind  
 As if the heads of pens were thickened  
     With an anointing of fine breast feathers  
 So he kills it with the claws on his feet  
     That do the work of blades and spears  
 So I said: Every living thing has a death day  
     Even when souls guard against the ruffian.

151 And Abu Ashar said to him: How quickly you produced those verses. So he said. (361)

Do you deny that what I said was impromptu?  
 But there is no denying the winning horse  
 I hunt difficult words by compulsion  
 I make a kill and no one but me is hunting.

152 And he came to him and there was a man with him who  
 was reciting verses describing his pool but he did  
 not mention him in the verses so Abu Tayyib said.  
 (362)

If he indeed did well in the description of it  
 He left out beauty in the description for you  
 For you are the sea, and the tides in truth  
 Cancel out in every respect this pool  
 It's as if your sword, not what you possess,  
 Remained with--and not what it possesses  
 For more than what it pours out is what you give  
 And more than that water is what it sheds  
 You create difficulties and good things by power  
 You revolve over men as the turning heavens.

153 And he spoke also praising Abu Ashar al Husain ibn  
 Ali al Hamdan. (362)

Do not think of your quarter nor yet its tell  
 As the first life that your parting killed  
 Souls have perished before it through you  
 And by your love they increased blame of it  
 Empty, desolate for us though people are there  
 And tents and camels resting from pasture  
 If this lover traveled through the heaven  
 Its stars wouldn't want the sun in its place  
 I love it and love itself and its campsite  
 For every lover is tenderhearted and mad  
 The shower succours it but it is thirsty  
 For something else though its clouds pour down  
 O destruction that you are O child of its gazelle  
 Whether there is staying or going it tells me  
 Even if musk and perfume were mingled there  
 And you not there I'd think it smelled bad  
 I am son of one greater than the father  
 Of a genealogist, and child is part of father  
 And he reminds ancestors that they are  
 Those who honor him and exhaust his art  
 Honor is for the sword, I rejoice to wear it  
 And for the lance, I rejoice to grasp it  
 Honor had to do me honor when I came to it  
 With a garment of its best and with shoes  
 I am he to whom Allah reveals whatever is fated  
 And manhood wherever He has placed it

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I am the jewel that generosity rejoices in  
 The obstruction not swallowed by baseness  
 As for the falsehood which he is tricked by 15  
 I scorn those who carry it to him  
 Not bothered nor hypocritical nor yet  
 Shortchanging nor wearied nor impotent  
 Many an armored one I sworded and he fell flat  
 In the onslaught and the dust and bereavement  
 Many a listener I frightened with rhymes  
 Exciting him with them and the choice speech  
 Often I have been present at a meal and with me  
 One not worth the bread which he ate  
 He showed his ignorance to me and I let him know 20  
 Pearl is pearl in spite of one's not knowing  
 It is a shame for Abu Ashar that I  
 Should drag his garments in another land  
 I trailed it with him among the kings  
 His robe feared him due to his companions  
 The swords of his slaves are like his gifts  
 The first load of his bounty is the rain cloud  
 It is not for me to refuse to praise al Husain  
 For I cannot lavish love as he lavishes 25  
 Does the watchman at his house fear the news  
 Or do slanderers achieve what they hoped?  
 Or is there no striking off of every head  
 That is proud in the hour of furious battle?  
 But the master of bounty cannot say farewell  
 Even if bounty had a slanderous tongue  
 He is a rider on terror and does not weaken  
 Even when terror is girded with exhaustion  
 Horseman of the red one that moves forward  
 Among the Tai with lance in rest in front 30  
 When their horsemen look on his face  
 He swears by Allah they will not see his back  
 They magnify his action and he belittles it  
 Greater than his action is he who does it  
 The killer, the persevering, the perfect one  
 No part of beauty separate from his efforts  
 The giver while his spears break through for him  
 Jousting and generosity are joined together  
 All the time he makes safe the land with raids  
 All the time the camps fear his attack  
 Each time he appears to the enemy in the morning 35  
 He is strong till it seems he lies in wait  
 He scorns the sword and the light lance when he  
 Pours chain mail on himself or lets it flow  
 The understanding educates his mind for me  
 And his eloquence educates my poetry  
 I was like the sword praising his hand  
 The sword does not praise all who bear it.

wanted to rise he gave him something until he gave  
him a garment and a girl and a colt so he spoke.  
(368)

Does the wind blow softly at my command  
And the cloud rejoice me each time I desire?  
On the contrary, the cloud has its own nature  
Which shines from it and so does nobility.

155 And Abu Ashar intended to make a journey and he spoke  
saying farewell. (368)

Men who have not seen you are much alike  
Time is a word and you are its meaning  
Bounty is an eye and its vision is in you  
Men shake hands and you are the right hand  
I am ransom for all those who are hard pressed  
By battle dust as his knights protect him  
The tip of al Husain's lance is the middle of it  
And the top of the warrior is in his legs  
Our garments sing the panegyrics for him  
With tongues which have no mouths 5  
When we passed by a deaf man with them on  
His eyes had no need for his two ears  
Glory be to Him who allotted distance to stars  
Otherwise they would get to be his bounty  
If the light of the suns were in his hand  
His generosity and art would diffuse it  
O travelers, everyone who says good-by to him  
Says farewell to his religion and his world  
If there can be in what we see of generosity  
Any growth in you, may Allah increase it. 10

156 It was said to Abu Ashar: You are not known except  
by your surname and yet Abu Tayyib does not use it.  
(369)

They said: Don't you use his surname? So I said:  
That is impossible when we describe him  
Abu Ashar is not given his due as one for whom  
The meanings of men are like his meaning  
Most knightly is one who when his horse swims  
The waves are nothing but those of iron.

157 Abu Ashar brought out for him a fine cuirasse and he  
said. (370)

With this and the like of it the ranks are split  
 And the last gasp ceases by greeting it  
 But throw it away for you by reason of nobility  
 Are its breast plate, sword and spear.

158 They set up an awning for Abu Ashar on the road at  
 Mayyafariqun and his clients thronged around him  
 and pressed on him so he spoke impromptu. (370)

People blame Abu Ashar on account of  
 The bounty of his hand with gold and silver  
 And it is said: Why were you made in this way?  
 The Maker of men is Maker of character.  
 They said: Why does not generosity restrain him  
 From setting up his tent on the road?  
 I said: Because the bravery of a young man  
 Shows him in stinginess a kind of fear  
 The sun inhabits the heavens but yet  
 Her distance does not veil her from the eye  
 By striking off heads of warriors a reward  
 Is earned by him that others earn by flattery  
 Be an ocean, O magnanimous one, for indeed  
 His sword makes one safe from drowning.

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159 He spoke and traced to Abu Ashar some men who wanted  
 to kill him at night on behalf of Saif al Daula and  
 he recalled that because of this affair they attacked  
 him. (371)

What happened to me is traced to one I love  
 The whir of arrows about me from his hand  
 He attacks from love of me, and not from baseness  
 Do I love but rather I unite with generosity  
 No friendship can endure with injury  
 Weakness prolongs my love for al Husain  
 And if there is an act which harms uniquely  
 Yet his acts that rejoiced us are myriad  
 My soul is his; may it be ransom for his soul  
 Yet some of these owners are too severe.

## SAIFIYYAT

160 And he spoke praising Saif al Daula Abu al Hassan  
Ali ibn Abd Allah ibn Hamdan at his descent to  
Antakya and his completing the conquest of Hisn  
Barzula in the latter part of Jumada in the year  
337. (373)

Loyalty in you two: spring camp whose traces pine  
By it you help as tears in its showers heal it  
And yet I am nothing but a lover and every lover  
The more refractory of two good friends blames  
They wear clothes of love not being of its family  
A man takes as friend one he doesn't agree with  
I die of grief of the tell if I do not stand here  
As a miser does who loses a ring in the dust  
Broken-hearted, the censurers warn me against love  
As a saddle girth warns a newly broken colt  
Stop, the first glance must pay a fine to my heart  
With a second, for destroyers of a thing pay  
May Allah pour out for you and revive us by you  
On the camel a flower and curtains its petals  
Departing women near you in the dark have no need  
For a moon, they do not lack it who love you  
When the eyes obtain a glance from you  
They rally a weary camel with it and feed it  
A lover who it seems is beloved by beauty who  
Chose him or was unjust in sharing fine traits  
The Khatti lances forbid taking him captive  
His generosity takes captives of every tribe  
Dust of horses shows the nearest of his curtains  
The farthest is spreading incense which clings  
My eye did not think parting strange when I saw it  
Nor did it teach me except what the heart knew  
Those who brooded hatred did not suspect me  
I fed on death until the colcynth was sweet  
Old is he who weeps for youth that made him gray  
Why dread it when the builder is wrecker?  
Perfection of life is youth and what follows it  
Lost color in sideburns and what precedes it  
A man does not dye his white hair because it is  
Ugly but rather because black hair is finest  
But more handsome than all the water of youth is  
A shower flashing awning and me forecasting  
Upon it are meadows which the clouds do not water  
Branches of high trees whose doves do not coo

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On the borders of every double edged strip 20  
 A thread of pearl, no composer pierced it  
 You see animals of the land reconciled there  
 Contrary wars against contrary and makes peace  
 When the wind strikes it billows as if  
 It made the horse prance and the lion crouch  
 Among images the Rum owning a crown submitting  
 To a dawn that has no crown except the turban  
 It is the lips of the kings that kiss his carpet  
 His sleeve and fingers too great for them  
 Waiting for him whose fire cures from sickness 25 .  
 Whose brand is twixt the ears of every hero  
 Their sword hilts beneath their elbows are in fear  
 Penetrated by one whose will is in his eyelids  
 He has an army of horses and birds when he attacks  
 An army with them, only its skulls remain  
 Their horsecloths are the robes of every tyrant  
 Their treading is on mouths of every despot  
 The light of dawn pales as they raid with him  
 Black night yields as they press round him  
 The spears tire as they strike his upper parts 30  
 Indian steel is weary as it pounds him  
 A cloud of eagles moves onward, beneath that is  
 A cloud whose swords pour out when they thirst  
 I followed changes of the times until I met him  
 On the back of resolve, his legs firm fixed  
 Deserts where his soul would not accompany a wolf  
 And where wings would not bear a raven  
 I saw a moon such as moon never saw the like of  
 I addressed a sea where swimmer sees no shore  
 I was angry for him when I saw his description 35  
 Without describer and poem whose babbler raved  
 And when I was crossing those distant lands  
 I went at night and was a secret night hid  
 Glory has drawn the sword of state as a standard  
 For glory cannot hide nor blows dull it  
 On the shoulder of highest rule is his sword belt  
 In the hand of heaven's strength is his hilt  
 The enemy wars on him but yet they are his slaves  
 They heap up wealth and that is his plunder  
 They magnify the times but times are less than he 40  
 They wonder at death but death is his servant  
 And he who named him Ali was fair in that  
 But he who named him sword did him injustice  
 Not every sword has edge that strikes off heads  
 His bounty breaks the drought of the times.

161 He spoke praising Saif al Daula when he was intending to make a journey to Antakya. (383)

Where do you intend to go, O magnanimous prince?  
 We are plants of hills and you the cloud

We are one that time pressed hard on due to you  
 And the days have cheated us of your presence  
 On the high road is your struggle and peace  
 And this the place of abode and the reins  
 Would that we were horses for you as you saddle  
 And when you alight that we were the tent  
 Every day is a new departure for you  
 And an expedition to glory where home is  
 And whenever souls are unlimited  
 The bodies are consumed by their intentions  
 And thus the full moons rise above us  
 And thus the mighty oceans are disturbed  
 The beautiful habit of patience is ours  
 If only the burden is other than your absence  
 Every life which you do not sweeten is death  
 Every sun which is not you is darkness  
 Make an end to the loneliness which we feel  
 O you whom huge armies are intimate with  
 Who witness the battle with settled heart  
 As though the struggle there was guaranteed  
 You who are striking the companies until  
 The vertebra in the neck and the feet meet  
 And when he makes camp for an hour at a place  
 It is forbidden to time to damage it  
 So that which the lands grow is happiness  
 That which the clouds rain is wine  
 Whenever it is said: There's an end. He shows us  
 Bounty such as generosity never guided to it  
 And striking before which the enemy faints  
 Cheerful giving at which men are amazed  
 The respect that Saif al Daula, the hoped for,  
 Has in our hearts as a king is a sword  
 It is much for the brave to be on their guard  
 It is much for the eloquent to say: Peace.

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162 And he spoke at the departure of Saif al Daula from  
 Antakya in a rainstorm. (386)

Be easy with yourself O splendid king  
 Delay and count it among what you give  
 Your bounty is in staying if only a little  
 But it is not small insofar as you give it  
 Put down the envious for I see enemies  
 As if they were your farewell and going  
 This cloud is appeased for we doubted  
 Whether Taglib or its rain was your tribe  
 I have blamed those who censure generosity  
 But here am I censuring his bounty  
 I do not fear misfortune for you on the way  
 For Saif al Daula is sharp and burnished  
 And every head of the chiefs hopes that  
 The road for your journey is his hair part

5

It seems that the hollows are full of blood  
 And the horses run with you in its flow  
 When a hero becomes used to wading in death  
 He scorns the filth which he passes there  
 He who commands forts so they do not press him 10  
 The rough and smooth places submit to him  
 Can you protect everyone whom the nights attack  
 Can you revive everyone whom obscurity buries?  
 We call you the sword but is there a sword  
 That brings to life the bodies of the dead?  
 The only activity for the sword is cutting  
 But you are the just slicer that joins  
 You are the knight who cries: Have courage!  
 When the word and the whinny fade away  
 The lance swerves from you though well aimed 15  
 It comes short of striking though it is long  
 And if the spear had the power of the tongue  
 It would say to you as a spear what I say  
 If eternity is a reward you alone are immortal  
 But there is no true friend for the world.

163 And he spoke lamenting the death of Saif al Daula's mother consoling him for her in the year 337. (388)

We prepared the fine swords and long spears  
 But death beats us without a struggle  
 And we tether the swift horses close at hand  
 But they do not escape from prowling nights  
 And who has not loved the world that is past?  
 But yet there is no way to rejoin it  
 The share you have in a loved one during life  
 Is the share you have in a dream in sleep  
 The times have hit me with misfortunes until 5  
 My heart was fainting with the missiles  
 And I had a feeling that when an arrow struck me  
 The head of one broke on the head of another  
 It was easy so I didn't worry about calamity  
 For I could find no use in being bothered  
 But this is the first of all the death notices  
 For the first dead lady with such importance  
 It is as if death had never surprised a soul  
 Nor shaken a creature with anxiety  
 Blessing of Allah our creator is embalming spice 10  
 For the face of the one shrouded in beauty  
 For the one buried in protection before the dust  
 And before the tomb in generous qualities  
 For it in the womb of the earth there is a person  
 Renewed so that we remember though it decays  
 There is not one who is immortal among earthlings  
 No, the world is in pursuit of cessation  
 It is good for the soul that you died a death  
 That survivors and deceased would have desired

You ceased but you never saw a hateful day 15  
 Such that the spirit rejoiced in its ending  
 An awning of glory above stood for long  
 The kingdom of Ali your son was perfection  
 May he water your house with a shower at dawn  
 Equal to the gifts of your hand in bounty  
 A downpour in a sweeping stream on the grave  
 Like the hoof of horses that see the feed bags  
 After you I have asked of every glory about you  
 But no thought of glory is empty of you for me  
 The beggar passes your tomb and he sheds tears 20  
 And the weeping keeps him from the begging  
 And he cannot guide you to giving for him  
 Would that you had the power of acting  
 By your life! have you forgotten while my heart  
 Though far from your land is not consoled  
 You have gone down to a place that is hateful  
 Removed yourself from the south and the north  
 Veiled from you is the perfume of the khuzami  
 Forbidden for you the smell of the rain  
 In a camp where all of the dwellers are strangers 25  
 Long the flight and broken the ropes  
 Pure as the water of a rain cloud in which  
 A secret was hidden, a word was faithful  
 A physician skilled in complaints attended her  
 Her only one, a physician of the heights  
 When they described to him a disease of the border  
 He poured in the points of long lances  
 And she was not like a woman nor yet those  
 For whom the tomb of a bride chamber is made  
 Nor were those in her funeral cortege hirelings 30  
 Whose farewell was shaking dust from shoes  
 The commanders walked barefoot about her  
 As if the stones were fluff of ostriches  
 The curtains of the veiled ones were brought out  
 They had applied soot in place of rouge  
 The calamity had come to them unexpectedly  
 Tears of grief in place of tears of laughter  
 And if these women were like that one we lost  
 Then women would be superior to men  
 Nor would the feminine name of the sun be shame 35  
 Nor the masculine be a boast to the moon  
 Most painful of those we lose are those we know  
 Before the loss we have lost the pattern of  
 Some of us bury the others and the last of us  
 Tramples on the skulls of the first  
 How many are the eyes whose eyebrows were kissed  
 Now have the kohl of pebbles and sand  
 Many a downcast eye did not look down for fate  
 Many a decayed one pondered the loss of weight  
 O Saif al Daula ask assistance of patience 40  
 How can mountains have patience like yours?  
 For you are the one who instruct men in courage  
 And the death plunge in the stream of battle

The changes of the times are wintry for you  
 But your condition is one in every change  
 May your seas never be empty O abundance  
 For watering the strangers and the strays  
 I see you among those that I know as kings  
 As if you were straight among the crooked  
 You surpass mankind and yet you are of them  
 For the musk is part of the gazelle's blood.

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16<sup>4</sup> He spoke praising him and commemorating the rescue  
 of Abu Wa'il Taglib ibn Da'ud when he was taken pri-  
 soner by the Kharajites among the Kalb and he defeat-  
 ed the Kharajites in Shaban in the year 337. (395)

How long will this eagerness for censure last?  
 There is no sense in love for a reasonable man  
 He wants forgetfulness of the heart from you  
 But nature it is that rejects such a change  
 Indeed I am in love through love of you  
 With my emaciation and every emaciate youth  
 And if you ceased to be I would not weep for you  
 I would weep for my love that ceased to be  
 Can my cheek deny my tears when in fact  
 They flow from it in a well traveled path?  
 Is this the first tear that flows over it  
 Is this the first grief for a departure?  
 I leave consolation to the one who blames me  
 And spend the night in the work of love  
 As if the eyelids that were over my eyes  
 Were garments rent because of bereavement  
 And if I were a prisoner of any other but love  
 I would become a hostage for Abu Wa'il  
 He ransomed himself with a pledge of pure gold  
 But he gave the nipple of the flexible lance  
 He endowed them with horses reserved for war  
 And they came with all the brave youths  
 It was as if the liberation of Abu Wa'il  
 Meant the return of the darkened moon  
 He called and you heard, how many silent ones  
 Though far away seem to be speaking to you  
 You came to him and with you a great army  
 As a pledge for him, as a surety to him  
 They came from a cloud of dust on the horizon  
 And from sweat of running in torrent  
 And when they dried out they felt the whips  
 As if they were rocks in a rainless land  
 They looked five days for the one they sought  
 Before the sight of the place to descend  
 Their legs sank in the dirt to their ankles  
 Trusting that they would be washed in blood  
 And what was between the thighs of the avengers  
 Was like that between the thighs of a pisser

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So they confronted all of the Rudaini lances  
 For they had drunk milk of the dry camels  
 And the army of the leader on a camel as well  
 Perfected in the leadership to falsehood  
 And so they turned and were outflanked by him  
 Like bees frightened and the beeman  
 Thus when you appeared to his companions  
 Their lions saw the devourer and his prey  
 With blows he shared with them unequally  
 For him the portion was just to them  
 With strokes he collected their scattered groups  
 As the stream from the udder collects itself  
 And whenever you looked at the horsemen  
 You perplexed their legs away from flight  
 Thus he continues to dye their beards but  
 As a hero he does not count on its fading  
 And he does not ask for help from allies  
 Nor is he routed by being forsaken  
 Nor does he withhold his horse from the front  
 Nor turn his eye away from the terror  
 When he seeks revenge it does not escape him

25

Even though the debt is deferred  
 Take what he brings you here and excuse him  
 For the plunder is for those who are swift  
 And if this year of yours has confused you  
 Then come back to Homs in the next one  
 For the sword tinged with blood which  
 Beat you is still in the hand of a killer  
 He makes a gift with that which you aimed at  
 But you did not achieve it as a suppliant  
 At the head of the army he will shine there  
 In place of the spear point for the bearer  
 I am indeed amazed at the expectations  
 For a killing with a sleeve on an old camel  
 Did not Allah tell him about not meeting those  
 Who have the sword on high spirited horses?  
 Whenever you strike the skulls with that

30

It trims them and sings for you on shoulders  
 He was not the first possessed of ambitions  
 That drew him to what could not be obtained  
 He girded the skirt from his feet for the depths  
 But the waves engulfed him on the shore  
 Is there not in the caliphate anyone who cares  
 For its sword of state that brings order?  
 He cuts off its enemies without a stroke  
 And travels to them without being borne  
 You leave their skulls in the sandy hillocks  
 And they cannot be recovered with a sieve  
 But you make them grow into meadows for beasts  
 And they praise your universal good qualities  
 And you return to Aleppo as a conqueror  
 Like a jewel returns to an undorned one  
 It was such a matter which you trod barefoot  
 That would have torn feet with shoes

35

40

45

How many a story about you is published  
 That has the piebald of a pinto shining  
 Many a day the drinking is with death's brothers  
 The most hated presence as the intruder  
 You make an end of slavery and enrich the beggar  
 And forgive the sins of the ignorant  
 May he who gives you victory bless it to you 50  
 May your efforts content him in the end of life  
 For this world is more deceiving than a harlot  
 And trickier than the gin of a trapper  
 Men wither away with infatuation for her  
 And do not achieve anything lasting.

165 And he spoke during the journey to his brother Nasser  
 al Daula when he began a campaign against Mu'izz al  
 Daula in the year 337. (402)

The height of a kingdom is built on spears  
 And jousting among its lovers is like kissing  
 And swords do not establish its dominion  
 Until they quiver a time beforehand over heads  
 In this way the prince seeking power is offered  
 Long lances and gifts of horses and camels  
 And determination; desire moves it. Zuhal  
 Is beneath it in the place of earth to Zuhal  
 Over the Forat is a whirlwind and in Aleppo 5  
 Depopulation due to meeting youthful Nasser  
 His lances follow letters which go ahead  
 And he makes cavalry substitute for messengers  
 He meets kings but only as sheep for slaughter  
 They do not defy him for he meets only plunder  
 The Caliph protects his blood with heroes  
 Cherishing the Indian steel with a scabbard  
 He does a deed that isn't done due to difficulty  
 Speaks words not forsaken nor lessened  
 He sends out armies whose dust assassinates 10  
 The light of day, so noon becomes twilight  
 The plain is narrowest when its clouds meet it  
 The sun's eye there is the most confused  
 He gives further than it does and it is an eye  
 That does not approach him except in fear  
 He has opposed the sword to his attackers there  
 And put resolution between him and deceit  
 He suspects secrets and they are revealed  
 His the hid things of folk of plain and hill  
 He is the brave one who thinks avarice dastardly 15  
 Bounteous, he finds a faint heart stingy  
 He returns from every conquest without boasting  
 And he hurries to it without any anxiety  
 Fate does not forbid him any of his desires  
 Nor can armor protect the blood of a warrior

When I put a robe on him for the sake of honor  
 I found it on him more fine than any robe  
 For the ignorant the reciting of it is wrong  
 Like the rose's perfume is harmful to beetles  
 Indeed every eye looks its fill of you 20  
 Best of the state prove the good of the sword  
 The enemy cannot uncover for you any weariness  
 Of warring, nor can counselors any faults  
 How many men without land for their numbers  
 You have left, all of them, land without men  
 Your horse does not cease to run in their blood  
 Until it goes the gait of drunkard for you  
 O he goes forth and the eyes' judgment is his  
 Whatever they see and heart's judgment is joy  
 For happiness exists as you are creator of it 25  
 You succeed whether in the saddle or out of it  
 Make your horses run as you have made them go  
 Take for yourself in your nature's prime  
 They stare from eyes whose sockets the knights'  
 Strokes bloodied with dripping lances  
 You do not attack with them except in conquest  
 You do not arrive with them except at your hopes.

166 And he spoke praising him and asked to accompany him  
 on this journey. (406)

Go! May the flowers grow wherever you settle  
 Destiny intends in you whatever you intend  
 And when you saddle up health accompanies you  
 Wherever you go continuous showers pour  
 Your fate shows you what it wants for the enemy  
 Until it seems its calamities are allies  
 You come back the richest returning from water  
 The eyes are raised to your approach  
 You are the one in whose memory the times rejoice 5  
 And evening talk is adorned with its stories  
 And when you refuse, destruction is the end of it  
 And if he forgives then his gift is life  
 And even if kings give, his is beneficence  
 The stream of kings to that stream is dregs  
 By Allah your heart does not fear any death  
 But it fears lest some shame approach you  
 You flee from the tendencies of human nature  
 And the numerous army flees from you  
 O he is hard on the harshness of his neighbor 10  
 And the strong one is subdued in his assaults  
 Be where you like for no desert can intervene  
 Between the meeting, nor the visit be far  
 The least emaciation that I have from your love  
 Makes the camel thin as the journey shortens  
 Truly those whom I left behind me are lost  
 But not by my choice but my passion for him

And if I am with him every water is sweet,  
 Though not familiar, and every land is home  
 Permission of the prince that I return to them 15  
 Is a gift that poetry will carry in its memory.

167 He spoke lamenting the death of the son of Saif al  
 Daula who died at Mayyafariqun in the year 338. (408)

We above ground have in you what you have in sand  
 And this consumes just as that wears one out  
 It is as if you saw what I have, and feared it  
 When you lived and chose death over bereavement  
 You left the cheek of a singing girl and over it 5  
 The tears melted the beauty in the wide eyes  
 She drenches the black powder of musk unmixed  
 And it has dripped crimson on the thick hair  
 Though you are in a tomb yet you are in the heart  
 If you are a child yet grief is not for a child  
 Such as you are not wept for according to years  
 But rather according to chivalry and lineage  
 Are you not from people who had as their lances  
 Their bounty; among their foes avarice's soul?  
 In their infancy silent of tongue as others  
 Yet in their faces was a speaking excellence  
 Their lofty ideals console them in every mishap  
 Earning praise distracts them from other work  
 Less worried in battle than the lances 10  
 More forward between the armies than arrows  
 Your patience Saif al Daula is followed as model  
 You are a blade and hardship is for blades  
 Remaining in the conflict at every stage  
 As if you were a relative of every sword  
 I see none more defiant to grief's tears than you  
 More firm in reason when heart has no reason  
 Death betrayed its compact with his offspring  
 But it aided him among knights and soldiers  
 His courage holds through the lapse of events 15  
 He shows like the sword shows in the burnish  
 He who is possessed of a soul like your free soul  
 Is self-sufficient due to it and consoled  
 Death is nothing but a thief with an airy shape  
 It attacks without hands and runs without feet  
 A father of cubs repels spearmen from his son  
 But he yields at its birth to the ants  
 By my soul a child returns after its birth  
 To the womb of a mother who has no labor pains  
 He appeared and held promise of a cloudburst 20  
 He died and left us the thirst of barren land  
 The thoroughbred horse had turned its eyes  
 Toward the time to change from shoes to bridle  
 The enemy's army feared him before he walked  
 Vehement war raged at him before he had grown

Has a dusty earth weaned him before his weaning  
And eaten him before he got to the food?  
Before he sees of his nobility what you see  
And hears of it what you hear from the critic?  
He finds as you find something of peace and war  
Grasps as you grasp a kingdom without compare  
His lances let him rule the middle of the land  
Their points protect him from withdrawal  
We weep for our dead who had no desire  
Pass from a world which was no great gift  
When you reflect on the times and their changes  
You are sure that death is a kind of murder  
Is a beloved child anything but an illness  
Solitude with beauty merely evil to a spouse?  
I have tasted the sweetness of sons in youth  
Don't think I said what I said ignorantly  
Fate is not wider than my knowledge of its affair  
Nor do the days write better than my hopes  
The age is not worthy that one should hope for  
Life from it even if one longs for children here.

168 And he also spoke impromptu when he asked for the description of a horse that had come to him. (414)

The place of horses in your bounty is small  
Even if there were a thousand steeds in it  
And of words a word sums up the description  
And that is: This is completely good.  
There is no option for us in bounty from you  
Everything which a nobleman gives is noble.

169 He spoke as he chose between two horses: a roan and  
a black. (415)

I take the roan of these two O rainfall  
O you choicest among the virtues  
You are one who if blamed in a company  
Would only be blamed because he is human  
And these his gifts were swords and horses  
And brown lances and whole camel herds  
One who puts his enemies to shame as if they  
Decreased for each time they increased  
May Allah protect you from their arrows  
He fails whose target is the moon.

170 And Saif al Daula ordered the presentation of a robe of honor to Abu Tayyib so he spoke. (416)

It achieved for us an act of heaven for its earth  
 A robe of the prince and his right not annulled  
 As if fineness in its weave was from his words  
 The beauty of its brightness from his honor  
 And when you rely on the nobility of his opinion  
 In bounty, the purity of his taste is clear.

## 171 And he spoke also praising him. (416)

No dream is generous with him nor with his image  
 Only a memory of his farewell and his loss  
 Sleep it was that brought back his ghost to us  
 His return was the ghost of his ghost  
 We passed a night, he gave us wine from his hand  
 And did not think in his heart we saw him  
 We gathered stars from the necklace on his neck  
 We got the eye of the sun from his ankle ring  
 You parted from the eye that was wounded by you  
 And settled in the thought of a dejected heart  
 You were close and your coming was from him  
 Were generous and your bounty was his wealth  
 Indeed I hate the phantom of him whom I love  
 Since he fled us at the time of its embrace  
 It was like passion and grieving and sorrow when  
 I parted from him, they told of his departure  
 And I retaliated against love and made it taste  
 In my purity what I had tasted of his grief  
 Indeed I have reserved for every land a time  
 That will scare the lion away from his cubs  
 Then front will meet front and between them  
 Will be blows as death roams his tract  
 And I have concealed the fine wine of my word  
 But poured the red for one I drank with  
 And when the coursers stumbled on its plains  
 I crossed its mountains without a fall  
 I traversed a vast desert land on a white camel  
 Used to it, exploring it, destroyed by it  
 He goes his gait as if the nags ran behind him  
 In their strength, and he won in his fatigue  
 And they without hobbles are scared of him  
 But he passes them speeding with his hobble  
 Then success appears and he rejoices in his legs  
 Gaiety comes and he exults in his gait  
 I shared the rule of the Hashimi in their sword  
 And I entered the royal lair for its lion  
 One whose perfection is forbidden to the lions  
 The prey forgets his fear because of his beauty  
 The princes are humbled round about his throne  
 He looks at his clients and this is his food  
 He kills before his battle and sends good news  
 Before his gifts, and gives before asked

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The winds when they come to one who awaits them  
 Find their coming relieves his need for haste  
 He makes gifts and endows kings with his pardon  
 Until humankind are equal in his generosity  
 When enriched by his gift on his initiative  
 He repeats and dispenses with their: Repeat it. 25  
 It is as if his generosity in its greatness  
 Were jealous of his clients in their smallness  
 The stars set and go down short of his ambition  
 They rise, when they rise, short of his giving  
 Allah makes his fortune propitious every day  
 And he increases his family with his enemies  
 If he does not make their hearts' blood flow  
 Over his swords it flows with his good luck  
 They do not leave an imprint on him from battle  
 Except for their bloodstains upon his armor  
 For such as him alone a huge host gathers itself 30  
 By such as him his enemies' armies are broken  
 Attend O moon whose face is made for shining  
 Do not tell lies for you are not of his type  
 And when the deep sea swells then admonish it:  
 Leave that, for you are weak compared to him!  
 He gives what he got of ancestors and can't feel  
 Their acts belong to a son without his acts  
 When inheritance is lost except for high ideals  
 He seeks the enemy with the long lance  
 With a vast army that wears the dust about them 35  
 Over their armor and trails it as a skirt  
 It is as if the day were blinded by its dust  
 Or cast down its eyes from him in his glory  
 The army is your army except you are its army  
 As its heart and its right and its left  
 It drinks the bitter jousting with its knights  
 It brings down the warriors with its warriors  
 Everyone desires his soldiers for his life's sake 40  
 O he desires his life for his men  
 Bitterness comes before sweetness of the times  
 You cannot reach it except after terror  
 For this reason only Ali is able to achieve it  
 And acquire by his sword what he hopes for.

172 And he spoke also praising him. (423)

I am in the midst of benefits and noble acts  
 By your good wishes in a steady shower  
 Things you scorn are all those you lavish  
 At them I look as with the eyes of a dreamer  
 Truly the caliphate did not name you its sword  
 Until it tested you and you were true sword  
 When it was crowned you were the jewel of a crown  
 When it set a seal you were the gem of a ring

When you unsheathed against the enemy in battle  
 They perished; his hand held back the hilt  
 Always your bounty exhausts all who are ready  
 To describe it, and hinders arm that hides it.

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173 And he spoke praising Saif al Daula who had ordered  
 a bay horse and a girl for him. (424)

Does the quarter know whose blood is spilled  
 And what sort of heart in this rider suffers?  
 For us and for its people there are always hearts  
 That meet in bodies that do not meet  
 The wind does not sweep this campsite for him  
 He who drives for them and guides defaced it  
 Would that the love of the beloved were just  
 So as to load every heart as it could bear  
 I watched them and the eye was udder full  
 And all of it was a duct for the tears  
 And the moon had reached the full among them  
 And it gave me the sickness of its waning  
 Between hair and feet there was a beaming  
 That guided the camels without a bridle  
 An eye, if one poured the beloved a cup of it,  
 Loss would give me a drink overflowing  
 A waist that vision fixed itself upon  
 As if there were a belt of eyes upon it  
 My horse and my sword console me for my way  
 In life, and my spear and swift, rangy camel  
 We put behind the white camel the land of Nejd  
 And turned aside from Samawa and Iraq  
 She did not stop looking though night was dark  
 For Saif al Daula the king of the lightning  
 Her guide was a musky wind that came from him  
 When she opened her nostrils she sniffed  
 He leaves the enemy to the beasts, O beasts  
 Why do you confront this traveling party?  
 If you follow that which the spear drives on  
 It suffices to keep you from our poor camels  
 And if we journeyed to him on the high roads  
 Of sun and moon we would not fear burning  
 He is the leader of the leaders of the Quraish  
 Against those who threaten him with schism  
 He is a sword against them when they rage  
 And a driver in the battle when they rebel  
 They should not be ignorant of his smiles  
 When attacks bloody mouths and oppress hard  
 The lances have guaranteed him the blood  
 And he loads his will on the fine horses  
 When they are shoed for tracking people  
 Though they are far they make them soles  
 And if the cry for help is faint from a place  
 They prick up their fine ears for him

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And the jousting between them in response to it'  
 Comes after a wait as between two milkings  
 So they are tossing their forelocks at death  
 Accustoming their riders to catastrophe  
 His lances spend the night above the necks 25  
 And the dust is set up for them as a tent  
 They bend as if the wine from the warriors  
 Repeated there the morning and evening cup  
 The wine wonders, for he has drunk it but  
 Is not drunk, is generous and recovers  
 Poetry stands by awaiting the giving  
 When it exceeds in a shower that surpasses  
 We pay the price of the bay horse from it  
 And we promise to pay for the girl with dowry  
 Allah forbid! your mercy could be imitated 30  
 Or your generosity could be immortalized  
 But we were only joking with you as the chief  
 Old camels yield to him as in the prime  
 He is a hero whose band plunders no corpse  
 But his pardon plunders prisoners of chains  
 You do not come with benefits to me by chance  
 Nor do I gain them from you as if in theft  
 Tell those who stir envy of me with you that  
 The lightning misses that tries to hit me  
 For of what use are the letters to the enemy 35  
 When one does not have the fine edged sword?  
 As for mankind that intelligent men have tested  
 They tasted but I have eaten them  
 I do not find their love other than trickery  
 I see their belief only as hypocrisy  
 Every sea falls short of your right hand  
 And what you cannot take of that I take  
 But for the power of creation we would say:  
 Is your character intentional or by chance?  
 May war never alight from the saddle for you 40  
 Nor the world ever give a taste of farewell.

174 And he spoke praising and lamenting Abu Wa'il Taglib  
 ibn Da'ud in Jumadi the first in the year 338. (430)

Sickness does not cling to any one born  
 More nobly than Taglib ibn Da'ud  
 He was one to disdain a death in bed  
 The most reliable promise was made to him  
 Such as he refused a death which was  
 Without a saddle on a fast, long horse  
 After the imprint of the lance on his breast  
 And his striking off the heads of chiefs  
 And his plunge into the depths of destruction 5  
 Where the heart of a brave man trembles  
 And if we are patient, well we are flinty  
 And if we weep it is no reproach

And if we grieve for him it is no wonder  
 Such an ebb tide in the sea was unthought of  
 Where are the gifts which were distributed  
 To the assemblies and the individuals?  
 The safety of good people after their parting  
 Escapes from grief but not from eternity  
 For what can souls hope for from a time 10  
 Whose best condition is without praise?  
 The misfortunes of the times know me well  
 For long I have tested wood with my teeth  
 I have that which strikes back at catastrophe  
 And makes me familiar with black misfortune  
 When he asked you for help you did not stay back  
 In the sheath O sword of the Banu Hashim  
 O most generous of the generous O king of kings  
 O hunter of all the hunters anywhere  
 He had died once before this and the blows 15  
 Of Khatti lances on the throat set him free  
 And your attack was at night with soldiers  
 You struck their eyelids with wakefulness  
 The lean cavalry came upon them toward morning  
 Among the troops up to the people  
 Their scabbards bore the ransom for them  
 They paid cash in blows like furrows  
 His stroke was on the bone of their skulls  
 Its scent was in the nostrils of beasts  
 He lost the life which you gave to him 20  
 With nobility he was grateful and loyal  
 He was sick in body but sound in generosity  
 Afflicted with evil, an aid of grief  
 Then death appeared with his chains  
 The hand with shackles did not loose him  
 The perishing did not diminish the numbers  
 Of him, Ali, making deserts too small for him  
 His troops go back and forth across its flats  
 With blasts of winds that come and go  
 They write the first letter of his name 25  
 Those hoofs of the horses on the rock  
 Whenever one consoles the young prince for him  
 Let it not be his boldness and bounty  
 It is our wish that he endure forever  
 So he may be consoled by all who are born.

175 He spoke and Saif al Daula was riding to see off his slave Yamak when he was attacking Raqqa at the front and the wind was blowing violently. (434)

The escorted one is not lacking to the escorted  
 Would that the winds would do what you do  
 They are up early perforce but you have a reason  
 You are the smooth plain and they the rough

You are the only one and they are four  
 You are the hard wood and the kings the soft.

176 He spoke as he was travelling to Raqqa and there was  
 a heavy rain at a place called Thadin. (434)

By my eyes! every day with you is lucky  
 They are excited by some wonderful affair  
 The attack of this sword is against a sword  
 The downpour of this cloud is on a cloud  
 The earth will dry after this shower  
 What clothes it as a dress is created  
 But the moisture from you will never cease  
 And your shower will continue to pour  
 Cavalry and early clouds accompany you  
 In a journey of joyful lovers 5  
 They are ransom for your bounty and imitate it  
 But they fall short of your sweet nature.

177 He spoke and Saif al Daula complimented him and was  
 compliant. (435)

I slander when I think of you in metaphors  
 Bounty comes, one talks of you and you hate it  
 And when I see you opposed to honor  
 I am sure that Allah desires to increase it.

178 He spoke and Saif al Daula added to his description.  
 (436)

Much blood has been shed by Saif al Daula  
 And many verses have enraged the kings  
 He who knows the sun does not deny its rising  
 Or sees a horse doesn't admire a pregnant mare  
 You endow with wealth the flock you own  
 For the land and the world are yours.

179 He spoke and they were in the midst of mountains on  
 the way to Amid. (436)

This sword moves forward toward his hopes  
 But the sword does not achieve his acts  
 When he traverses the plain he spreads far  
 And in the mountains he moves upward  
 You by what you give us are a king  
 Who bears fruit from his wealth for his flock

As if you among us were the lion  
Who teaches his cubs how to devour.

180 Some people criticized him for saying: Would that when you saddled up I were the horse and when you came down I were the tent. And they said: The tent is above him. So he said. (437)

They have in fact elevated a tent to nobility  
I reject the interpretation absolutely  
I do not grant a place above you to the Thurya  
I do not grant a place above you to the sky  
You have laid waste the land of Syria until  
You plundered its quarters of bright dress  
They sigh and Awasim is ten nights from you  
Yet the sweetness is smelled in the air.

181 Saif al Daula mentioned the grandfather and father of Abu Ashar and Abu Tayyib spoke. (437)

More masterful of two sides is that you are on  
The lord of lineage he who relates to it  
This is one whose grandfather and father you are  
Being nearer than his grandfather or father.

182 He spoke and Muezzin was calling so Saif al Daula put the cup from his hand. (438)

O you call but not to recall the forgetful  
Nor do you soften one hard of heart  
The prince is not distracted from the heights  
Nor from claims of his Creator by a cup.

183 And Saif al Daula mentioned a verse that he wanted to have added to and it was: I went at the early departure to meet the beauty \* And I did not see anything sweeter than you in eye or heart. So he spoke. (438)

We ransom you, best of men for share of my heart  
Most deadly for the armored ones not at war  
Love is unique in its rule over its people  
You are lovely in obstinacy, fair in falsehood  
I am indeed protected from death in battle  
Even though I am devoted to death in love

He who has your eyes between his eyelids  
 Finds the slope of a plain on a steep ascent.

184 He spoke also praising Saif al Daula at Mayyafariqun  
 as he commanded the army to horse and combat and ar-  
 mor and preparedness and this was in the month Shawwal  
 the year 338. (439)

Whenever it was praise a love prelude came first  
 Do all the eloquent speak the poetry of love?  
 The love of Ibn Abdallah is nearer, for by this  
 Beautiful memory begins and ends in him  
 I submitted to maids until the desire of my eyes  
 For a vision that dwarfs others and enlarges  
 Saif al Daula is set over against the entire age  
 He strikes at its limbs and he pierces  
 His judgment increases until it is above the sun  
 His beauty shines until it is above the moon  
 As if enemies in their lands were his vicars  
 As he desires they hold them or surrender  
 No letters except the Mashrafi swords for him  
 No messengers but battalions of huge armies  
 Not lacking in aid from anyone who has a hand  
 Or lacking in thanks of one who has a mouth  
 Nor does the wood of the pulpit lack his names  
 Nor do the dinars or the dirhams lack them  
 A striker when that between the swords is narrow  
 Foresighted when darkness is among the brave  
 They compete as shooting stars in every night;  
 His stars and among them the red and the roan  
 They trample a warrior whom they did not bear  
 And fragments of spears which could not resist  
 And they are running with the wolves on land  
 And they swim with the big fish in the sea  
 They are hid with the gazelles in the valley  
 They hover with the eagles among the peaks  
 And when men obtain the ashwood then he  
 With them and their breasts smashes through  
 By his eminence in war and peace and argument  
 And lavish giving and praise and glory known  
 He who does not love him acknowledges his virtue  
 He who knows no stars allots happiness to him  
 He guards against the days until I think he  
 Will seek the return of Ad and Jurhum  
 Confusion for this wind whatever it wants  
 Guidance for the shower whatever it intends  
 Did not the flood ask that tried to destroy us?  
 And the blunted sword informed it of you  
 And when the cloud meets you with its downpour  
 It meets the top of its fullness and nobility  
 It works on roads as soon as he manages a lance  
 It wets clothes as soon as blood wets them

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It follows you and one shower follows the other  
 From Syria as the student follows the teacher  
 It visits her tomb which the horse visits  
 Love burdens him whom she was burdened with  
 When you are in front of the army its pride is 25  
     For them in a rider with floating turban end  
 Around him is a sea of armor undulating  
     A mountain of horse goes with him raging  
 All regions are equal to him until he seems  
     To gather jumbled peaks and put them in order  
 And every youthful warrior has on his brow  
     The writing of blows spelled with spears  
 The lion extends his arm in the chain mail  
     And his eyes beneath the visor are serpent's  
 As their races are their flags and their hair 30  
     And what they wear and the poisoned weapons  
 Length of battle has taught them and his glance  
     Signals to them afar and they understand  
 They respond with action but do not hear a sound  
     He makes them hear a look and does not speak  
 They avoid the right hand turn as if they  
     Pitied Mayyafariqun and felt sympathy for it  
 And if it gave them a push with its shoulders  
     It'd know which of two walls is weak or ruin  
 For every thin belly under every thin belly 35  
     He pours a drink of blood and feeds with flesh  
 The dress of rider above them is theirs in battle  
     So every war horse has an armor that veils him  
 This is not greed of soul faced by the lance  
     Rather the firmest push to evil with evil  
 Do Indian swords think your root is their root?  
     But due to that you reprove what they fancy  
 When we name you we imagine that our swords  
     Due to their pride smile in their scabbards  
 We do not see a king claim anything near him 40  
     So he is happy and pities but they are witless  
 You take from these souls every path  
     Of life to give what you please and refuse  
 No death except what your spear threatens  
     No provision but what your right hand shares.

185 They set up for Saif al Daula a large tent at Mayyafariqun and people spread out about it since the place was agreeable. But the wind blew furiously and the tent fell down and there was much talk about its collapse so he said. (445)

Is blame of any use with respect to the tent  
     Could it cover one who guarded its fate?  
 Was it above one who has Zuhal below him  
     A place, by your life, that you ask for!

And why doesn't it rebuke him who blames it  
 The stone of his seal ring isn't Yadbul  
 Its sides were too narrow for your person  
 Though cavalry pranced in a part of it  
 It was too low when you were within it  
 Though pliant lances were upright in it  
 And how should it stand over a palm  
 Whose fingers are as it were the sea?  
 Would that you could part with your dignity  
 And load your land with what you carry  
 Mankind would become princes with that  
 And you rule them with what you had left  
 It sees the color of your light in its light  
 As the sun's color does not wash away  
 And that it had such tremendous height  
 That tents were ashamed in comparison  
 They should not find strange its fall  
 For something can kill in the soul's joy  
 And if men attained what it had attained  
 Their legs would fail them due to your power  
 And when you gave order for its pitching  
 The news spread that you were not going  
 Allah did not intend that it be plucked up  
 But gave a hint what you should do  
 He told them you are of His persuasion  
 That you in His aid trailed the skirt  
 Who are these strays and what their origins  
 Who are these enviers with their gossip?  
 They are seeking but what do they arrive at  
 They are telling lies but who accepts them?  
 They are longing for what they are coveting  
 But your gracious bounty is beyond them  
 The squadron as chain mail is his armor  
 Even though the velvet is made of spears  
 With them perdition surprises one army  
 And the dust of them warns yet another army  
 I have made provision for you in my heart  
 For you do not make it with any hand  
 Allah has indeed raised up a kingdom  
 For it from you, O its sword, is the point  
 And if that edge has been shaped before you  
 Yet you before it were the one who cuts  
 And if before you people now gone excelled  
 Yet you were the first in generosity  
 And how could you come short of the goal  
 When your mother bore a cub from her lion?  
 She had borne you indeed and men did say:  
 Isn't the sun incapable of bearing?  
 Woe to the faith of the servants of the stars  
 And he who claims that they have reason  
 They have known you but they have no minds  
 They see you see them but they do not bow  
 If you spend a night in your proper places  
 The highest of you will spend it as lowest

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You give your servants what they contemplate  
May your Lord give you what you hope for.

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186 He spoke and Saif al Daula rode from the place known as Senabus toward Semandu in the year 339. (450)

Today after a while there will be good odors  
The fire against the enemy with flames  
But chaste women spend the night safe from them  
And pilgrims find peace in their paths  
Your enmity did not cease wherever there was  
Prey, O lion who has been stirred up  
I knew you and the ranks were set in order  
But you had no care except for your sword  
The ways of the sea are known from afar  
When it is quiet but how when waves toss?  
In a country where travel fatigue destroys  
Though the crotches of runners are full  
They seek the king of Rum himself there  
The foreign troops are ransom for him  
Have the Christians threatened us with agony  
We are their stars which are a constellation  
And with us the sword whose attack is true  
When he arrives, and whose war is resolute  
We seek protection for him from evil eyes  
The uproar increases with prayers for him  
The Domesticus pleases us without pleasure  
Where the sword and ash wood judge  
And if he advances we visit him at Semandu  
And if he flees our bond is at the Khalij.

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187 And he spoke praising him and commemorating the attack which the Muslims inflicted near the lake al Hadath and described the affair bit by bit and in detail. (451)

Another than I is deceived by most of these men  
If they fight they run or talk they are brave  
People of courage except when one tests them  
In a test after the mistake they do not hold  
Life and myself are nothing after they know  
That life is foul in a way one doesn't want  
Beauty of face is not in the curve of its nose  
A proud nose cut off from honor is mangled  
Shall I fling glory over my shoulder yet want it  
Shall I leave help in a sheath and seek food?  
The Mashrafi sword cannot cease to be honorable  
A cure for every noble one or a disease  
A rider of a horse that rushes, he steadies it  
In glens, and blood on its side is a shower

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They leave him but no anxiety is in his heart  
 They anger him but no meanness is in his word  
 All the princes defend themselves with an army  
 This army is defended by the son of Abu Hija  
 A first drink leads a troop to the farthest drink      10  
 Speed on the bit and the reins held tight  
 No town hinders his journey to another town  
 Like death, no water and no feed is his  
 Until he arrives at the walls of Kharshana  
 Rum and crosses and churches sorrow at this  
 The married as slaves and the babes dead  
 The savings plunder and the harvest as fire  
 All Marj is left to him setting up at Sarakha  
 Pulpits, for his witnessing on Friday  
 He feeds birds with them and long is their meal      15  
 Until they almost fall upon the live ones  
 And if the Disciples saw him they would set up  
 Out of love of him a sect that would be legal  
 The Domesticus blames his eyes, for black clouds  
 Appear and they think of little rain clouds  
 In them are armed men their weanlings, warriors  
 As palm trunks on two year old horses  
 Lucan is winnowed as dust in their nostrils  
 And in their throats the swallowed Halys  
 As if they met them to tread them as a highway      20  
 And jousting opened bellies they widened  
 They guide their eyes though the battle is dark  
 A fire from the points and a candle of lances  
 Before the heat of summer and before the cold  
 The swift, lean ones overflow their souls  
 When unbeliever calls to unbeliever the lance  
 Intervenes so one rib parts from its sister  
 The greatest of the sons of Phocas were shackled  
 As he passed them and braver than he were dead      25  
 And what escaped from the sword's edge flight  
 Saved, but terror was in their hearts  
 He took sanctuary for a time and he was insane  
 And drank wine for a year but still was pale  
 How many a patrician soul had been pledged  
 To the sword secured while he abstained?  
 That hindered walking for him if he tried it  
 That drove off sleep whenever he lay down  
 Death appears and won't stop waiting for orders  
 Until he says: Back to me. Then it moves off      30  
 Tell Domesticus: Those who surrendered to you  
 Betrayed the Emir; he pays their deed  
 You found them sleeping in that blood of yours  
 As if your violent death distressed them  
 Weaklings, the foes abstain from their likes  
 Among foes, and if they want them they retreat  
 Do not think those you captured have any breath  
 For the jackal will eat only the carcasses  
 Halloo on the banks of the wadi where the lions  
 Come up, they pass one by one, not grouped

Every long bodied horse splits you with lances  
 And a blow takes more of you than it leaves  
 Indeed Allah sets the soldiers over against you  
 So they are without stain when they return  
 Every attack made on you after this will be his  
 Every attacker is a follower of Saif al Daula  
 The noble walk in footsteps not their own  
 And you create what comes and are original  
 Can any moment harm you when you are its knight?  
 In it others are the weaklings and suckers  
 He whose place is above the orbit of the sun  
 Nothing can exalt or abase him  
 Repeated attacks in mountains do not betray  
 His blood, though friends and helpers yield  
 Would that kings were donors according to worth  
 Then there would be no temptations to filth  
 You prize those who watch as you go to battle  
 And strike with a lucid sword as they listen  
 Indeed some allow you a fraud in a transaction  
 If you make use of it without veracity  
 Fate makes excuses but a sword is waiting  
 And their lands are yours in summer and spring  
 The mountains of the Nasrani cannot protect them  
 Even if the sturdy goats become Christian  
 I do not praise you for dread you are firm in  
 Until I prove you and the hero fights  
 Some think it bravery when one has recklessness  
 Some think it cowardice if one shudders  
 As for armor all of mankind can wear it  
 But not everyone with claws is a lion.

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188 He spoke and Saif al Daula was in pursuit of the  
 Domesticus in the year 340. (458)

We visit homes whose situation we do not love  
 We ask permission of no inhabitants here  
 We lead there those who take us to the goal  
 Upon them warriors who think well of them  
 We cherish him called Abu Hasan al Hawa  
 We accept Him called Allah and no other name  
 And the Rum, these schismatics, know that we  
 As we leave their land behind will return  
 And when death lets down its veil in battle  
 We take up our cause with blows and thrusts  
 We go to it with a lover's aim whose rendezvous  
 Is with us, and we say to swords: Let's go!  
 Many a horse we transfixed with spears after  
 They gathered from hither and yon against us  
 They were beaten toward us with whips unwitting  
 When they knew us they were whipped away  
 Go past the villages and touch for us the army  
 You arrive at what your right hand wants

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In fact their blood is cooling above Lucan 10  
 We are men who follow the cool with the hot  
 And if you are Saif al Daula sharp against them  
 Allow us to be a light lance before the cut  
 We are those who do not short you with aid  
 You are he who if alone would not need it  
 He keeps you from death who wants glory in you  
 And says: I am not content with a vile life.  
 Except for you blood would not flow nor bounty  
 Nor in the world or its people any meaning  
 For fear is nothing except what the youth fears 15  
 Safety is only what a hero knows to be safe.

189 He spoke and Saif al Daula had decided to attack  
 Kharshana but the snow kept him from doing so. (460)

Critics of one who has a mole envy me  
 Indeed my beautiful bedfellow is most noble 5  
 He kept his hand from her dress though able  
 He disobeyed her love's ghost though asleep  
 When a lover recovers from burning love  
 Within, a parting is in his nearness to her  
 Since you feared shame in every solitude  
 Why should a handsome woman beguile you?  
 Illness stays with me till I am friends with it  
 My doctor and nurse are bored at my bedside  
 I passed by the camp of the beloved and my horse  
 Whinnied but why does this place grieve horses?  
 The roan is not ignorant of traces of the camp  
 The girls poured camel's clabber for her there  
 I long for something and it seems that nights  
 Drive me from its essence and I drive  
 And I am alone among friends in every land  
 When the goal is great the helpers are few  
 But a fast swimmer helps me from agony to agony 10  
 Witnessing these things she has what it takes  
 She bends toward the direction of the jousting  
 As if her joints were bridled to the lance  
 I bring my soul and the sword is in my hand to  
 Watering without return to one of no courage  
 But when the heart does not bear its hand  
 In an affair, the arm will not bear it  
 My two friends, I cannot see any but nonpoets  
 Why do they make the claims and I the qasidas?  
 Do not be surprised that the swords are many 15  
 But yet Saif al Daula is today the only one  
 He has a noble nature that is unsheathed in war  
 Used to goodness and forgiveness sheathed  
 And when I saw men who are short of his rank  
 I was sure time has high standards for men  
 Most worthy of the sword that strikes off heads  
 And of rule that difficulties are easy for

No plagues Allah's land\* that the Rum inhabit  
 By this and those there who disown your glory  
 You set cavalry on them until you leave them  
 The eyelids beyond Franza are sleepless\*  
 Dyed with blood the people are prostrate as if  
 Though not praying they are yet in a mosque  
 You overturn them and horses are their mountain\*  
 You penetrate them and spears are stratagems  
 You cut them apart and they dwell in the rocks  
 Like the big snakes live in dusty hollows  
 The high fortresses on the peaks appeared early  
 And your horses were necklaces for their necks\*  
 They stormed them at Luqan and drove them off  
 To Hinxit, until Amid was shining with slaves  
 They overwhelmed Safsaf with Babur and it fell  
 Their people tasted death and their stones  
 The brave one went with them late in the valley  
 Blessed servant not under any double veil  
 The youth desires a wider land and time  
 His hour and goal are too small for him  
 He is a brother of war whose swords are not slow  
 On their necks except if the Sihan is icy  
 There only remained those he saved from the sword  
 Red were their lips and high their breasts  
 The patricians weep for them in the dark nights  
 And they among us are thrown like pillows  
 With these the days behave as with other people  
 Misfortunes for some and benefits for others  
 It shows the courage of nobility that you by them  
 Are beloved in spite of the beating you gave  
 That blood you made flow is an honor to you  
 That heart you made fearful praises you  
 And everyone sees the way of bravery and bounty  
 But soul's nature is to have a leader  
 You rob life from those who if you saved it  
 Would greet the world with your immortality  
 You are the sword of rule and Allah the striker  
 You are religion's flag and Allah is the standard  
 And you are Abu Hija ibn Hamdan O son of him  
 The best of children and the father are alike  
 The Hamdani are praised and praised are Harith  
 And Harith is of Luqman who is guided  
 All of these were the teeth of the Caliphate  
 And the other kings of the land were excess  
 I love you O sun of the times and its moon  
 Even if Suha and the Forqad blame me for you  
 And this is because virtue with you is shining  
 And not because life with you is easy  
 For a little love to the wise is health  
 And much love for the ignorant is corruption.

tenant Yamak who passed on in the month of Ramadan in  
the year 340. (467)

May Allah not grieve the Emir for I  
Must have a share in his condition  
He who elated earth's people and wept in pain  
Wept with those eyes and heart he rejoiced  
As for me if the buried man was his friend  
A friend of my friend is my heart's friend  
Men have parted from their friends before us  
Death's sickness has baffled every physician  
We are preceded by a world so if its people lived 5  
We would be unable to come or go here  
The heir possesses with the hold of one bereft  
The inheritance departs as youth goes  
No virtue here for the brave or bounteous  
No courage for youth without meeting death  
The most complete mortal life for its owner is  
The life of man broken off after graying  
May Yamak remain in my heart as a passion  
For every Turk whose root is transplanted  
But not every white face has a blessing 10  
Not every narrow eyelid has excellence  
If sorrow for him displays itself in us  
It also appears in the edge of every sword  
And in every bow every day it vies in archery  
And in every horse every day it is ridden  
It was hard on him that he must leave his habit  
That you call for a thing and he not answer  
And when I looked at him standing with you  
I saw one with the double mane of skill  
Though he was a rich jewel yet you lost him 15  
From a lavish hand generous in giving  
As if death was hostile to every glorious one  
If he asks no refuge from blame for glory  
If it were not for time's gifts which unite us  
We would forget and not feel its crimes  
But refusal of gifts is best for him who takes  
When one makes a gift without confederate  
And he for whom Nizar became a servant  
Can do without making slaves of foreigners  
He satisfies pure love in slavery to him 20  
And nearness to him in honor of kinship  
May Saif al Daula be repaid in loss, for he is  
The best reward from the best rewarder  
Hero of cavalry whose chests are wet with gore  
He jousts in the tight spots with violence  
He loathes the broad tents in those wars of his  
His only tent is the dust of battle  
Felicity for us is duty if it is useful to you  
In splitting hearts not in rending clothes  
Many a sorrowing one has eyes that do not weep 25  
And many with copious tears have no grief

Be consoled in the thought of your fathers for  
 You wept but there were smiles soon after  
 When a noble soul approaches its misfortune  
 In fear, it turns and changes it to patience  
 The one who finds affliction in his sighs has  
 Peace in strength or peace in fatigue  
 How many of your kin has eye not seen the face of  
 But you did not flow in his track with tears  
 Souls of the envious ransom you, for they  
 Are tortured both present and absent  
 In fatigue one envies the light of the sun  
 And strives to attain it by imitation.

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191 And he spoke praising Saif al Daula and commemorating  
 the building of Marash in Muharram in the year 341.  
 (472)

We ransom you among camps though you add agony  
 For you are dawn to a sun and its setting  
 How can we recognize traces of one who left us  
 Neither heart nor mind to know the traces?  
 We got down from the saddles and walked in honor  
 Of one who had gone lest we trample there  
 We blamed the high clouds for their acts there  
 Turning from them, blaming times they appeared  
 If one is with the world a long time it changes  
 In his eyes, until he sees its faith as lies  
 What is my pleasure in evenings and mornings  
 Since that wind which blew does not return?  
 There I think of a union I seem not to have won  
 And a life which I seemed to pass in one jump  
 And some charming eyes that are fatal to love  
 When her smell spread to a sheik he was young  
 Her skin is of pearl of which she has a necklace  
 I never saw a moon before her ringed by stars  
 O desire how lasting and O mo in this separation  
 O tears what a flow O heart overwhelmed  
 Parting that scatters sported with her and me  
 Fed me on the journey what it fed the lizard  
 But he whose ancestors were fierce lions  
 Finds night as day and his food by force  
 I do not worry after my attaining the heights  
 Whether I inherit what I gain or earn it  
 Because many a youth has taught himself glory  
 As Saif al Daula learned by thrust and cut  
 When the state is satisfied with him in trouble  
 He suffices it and is sword, hand and heart  
 Indian swords are feared and they are steel  
 But how then if they are Nizari Arab?  
 The lion's fangs are dreaded when he is alone  
 But how when the lions are companions to him?

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The surge of the sea is frightful in its place  
 So how with him who covers lands as he flows?  
 Knowing the secrets of religion and language  
     He has thoughts which shame men and books  
 You are blessed among showers so our skins seem  
     To grow brocades and silks and fine cloth  
 Among generous givers and strong pushers forward  
     Those who tear off armor and scatter bones  
 Your judgment for them is a joy to border people  
     You are Allah's party so you are their party  
 You have scared off fate for them and its worry  
     If it doubts let it appeal in its court  
 One day with horsemen you drive Rum from them  
     Then by bounty you drive off want and drought  
 Your invasions continue and the *Domesticus* flees  
     His lieutenants dead and his wealth plundered  
 Nearing Marash he thought in coming the far near  
     He turned as you came and thought the near far  
 Thus he abandons the enemy who hates the lances  
     And he journeys whose booty is terror  
 Did his stand at Lucan ward off for him  
     Breasts of spears and strong lean horses?  
 He went on after the lances tangled for a bit  
     As one eyelid meets in dozing the other  
 But he turned away as jousting became keen  
     When his soul thought of it he felt his side  
 He left the virgins, patricians and estates  
     Wild-haired Nasrani, courtiers and crosses  
 I know that each of us desires life for himself  
     Coveting it and desiring it passionately  
 A coward's love of self brings fear to him  
     A brave man's self love brings him to battle  
 The two provisions differ but the acts are one  
     So it seems this is good and that a sin  
 This shines as if the wall from its origin above  
     Down to earth must split stars and dust  
 The bustling winds are stopped by it in fear  
     Birds are scared by it from gleaning grain  
 Short haired horses pound over its mountains  
     The north wind sends down cotton on its roads  
 It suffices as wonder that men wonder that he  
     Built Marash, fie on their notions, fie!  
 And what is the difference between men and him if  
     He fears the feared and finds the hard hard  
 The caliphate readied him for work with the enemy  
     Named him before the world the Keen Sword  
 Spearheads did not scatter from him in pity  
     Nor the enemy leave Syria for love of him  
 Rather he exiled them from him without honor  
     Noble in praise, never cursing nor cursed  
 An army that splits every mountain as if it  
     Were searing wind aimed at a tender stalk  
 As if the stars of the night feared his attack  
     And stretched over it a veil of his dust

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Whoever contents blame and unbelief in a kingdom  
 Yet he is pleased with nobility and the Lord.

192 And Saif al Daula made him a gift of a Rumi robe and  
 a spear and a horse and with it a colt, and the colt  
 was the best. (479)

A robe of nobility does not guard its beauty  
 When it was given the giver was its wardrobe  
 A weaver of Rum shows us their kings in it  
 She reveals herself to us and her slaves  
 Her design was not satisfied with knights alone  
 She painted all things except her time  
 She was not restrained in her powers of design  
 But she could not make her creatures talk  
 And the lance whose length seduces the knight  
 He remembers repeated attacks and jousting  
 Rudaini perfected it and almost its growth  
 Fitted it with its iron foot and its point  
 Noble's mother whose brother is less than father's  
 He saw her beauty who admired him and he swore  
 As she trots with him she reveals him and he her  
 To a keen eye she is worse and he adorns her  
 Where is she whose evil horsemen do not trust--  
 Or my evil or gives her safety only to me?  
 Where is she who shies not falsely at a lance  
 As it lowers and my hand pulls on her reins?  
 No praise by me if I do not see you in its place  
 Or favor in you not seeing me in its place.

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193 And he spoke praising Saif al Daula and complaining  
 to him. (481)

O fevered is his heart for one of cold heart  
 And one who in my body and state is sick  
 Why should I hide a love that emaciates my flesh  
 When nations claim the love of Saif al Daula?  
 If a love has united us in his bright brow  
 Would that by decree of love we might share  
 I visited him and the Indian swords were sheathed  
 I watched him and the swords were blood  
 He was the handsomest creation of all by Allah  
 And finest among the fine things was character  
 Missing the enemy whom you pursue is a victory  
 In part of it pain and in part graciousness  
 Violent fear was lieutenant for you, and for you  
 Terror did the work which warriors do not do  
 You insisted on that for which there was no need  
 That no land or mountain give cover to them

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Each time you beat an army and it turns to flee  
 Will ambition act for you in its pursuit?  
 It is your duty to rout them in every battle  
 But not to put shame on them when they run  
 Or don't you see victory sweet except as a prize  
 Where Indian steel and neck curls clasp?  
 O most just of men except in dealing with me  
 The feud concerns you who both plead and judge  
 I take refuge in your glances that are trusted  
 Not to think fat one whose fat is tumidity  
 What use has a brother of the world in his eyes  
 When light and dark are the same to him?  
 I am he whose culture the blind look toward  
 And my words have made the deaf to hear  
 I sleep with quiet eyes apart from their roving  
 But men wake to their course and fight for it  
 My smile allows to many a fool his ignorance  
 Until a ferocious paw and mouth hit him  
 Whenever you see these fangs of the lion bared  
 You must not think that the lion is smiling  
 Many a heart whose master lusted for my blood  
 I hit from a horse whose back is inviolate  
 His back feet running as one and forefeet one  
 His action is what hand and foot desire  
 Many a keen sword I went with between armies  
 Until I hit as death's waves pounded past  
 Horsemen and the night and the desert know me  
 The sword and the lance, paper and the pen  
 I have been with the beasts in the desert alone  
 When slopes and hills were amazed at me  
 Those whose parting has been hard on us, O  
 Our feeing for everything after you is empty  
 What an honor for us in generosity from you  
 If your concern would seek our concern  
 If what those who envy us said pleased you  
 Then no wound for me if pain delights you  
 Between us if you respected it this knowledge  
 Knowledge which for wise men means loyalty  
 How often you sought faults in us and tired  
 But Allah and nobility hated what you did  
 How distant are blame and defect from my heights  
 I am Thurya and they gray hair and age  
 Would that the cloud whose lightning hits me  
 Would send them to one who gets the shower  
 I see that distance allots me all the journeys  
 Which strong striding camels cannot reduce  
 So I will leave Dumair on our right hand  
 Grief comes to those to whom you said goodbye  
 When you journey from people and they are able  
 Not to let you go then it is they who depart  
 Worst of lands is a place with no friend in it  
 The worst man can earn is what dishonors him  
 The worst game my hand has hunted is that where  
 The gray falcon is equal to the vulture

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By whatever words these rascals speak in verses  
 They cannot be for you either Arab or Persian  
 This is a reproach to you except that it is love  
 Enclosed in pearls except they are words.

195 And when he had recited this qasida and the indignation of the assembly had been calmed then a Nabataean who was in the assembly said to him: Permit me. I will have his blood so it will be a cheap death for this. And the Nabataean's name was al Samarri. And he was very proud of his writing. And about him Abu Tayyib spoke. (486)

O Samarri, laughing stock of all who know, do  
 You understand? you the dullest of fools?  
 Too small for praise so you said I will mock  
 As if you were not too small for satire  
 I didn't pay much attention to folly before you  
 Nor did I test my sword on dust motes.

196 And he spoke also about what went between them concerning the complaints in the mim qasida. (486)

O let Saif al Daula not complain today  
 Men ransom him, sharpest of striking swords  
 What is mine when I stray and see before him  
 Deserts I do not want and wastelands?  
 Indeed he brought my council near to his heaven  
 I spoke there with its moon and its stars  
 Have pity on a beggar and be near to a suitor  
 I had enough of gifts and you of giving  
 Is this the reward for truth if I am truthful  
 Or the reward for falsehood if I am false?  
 If my sin was the worst of sins yet he who  
 Comes repentant wipes out the worst of sins.

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197 And he spoke excusing himself for what he said in the mim qasida. (487)

My tears respond and the caller is only the tell  
 Crying; one answers before riders and camels  
 I tried to stop it many times among my companions  
 But it flowed between excuse and censure  
 I grieve for distance and they wonder at my tears  
 And so I was, I fretted only for the veil  
 But there is no passion of a lover who has hope  
 Of meeting, like that of a lover without hope

When you visit the people of the one you love 5  
 They make no gift without sword and spear  
 But flight is more deadly than my being watched  
 I am drowning but my fear is not of wetness  
 No thought in any of her people of what  
 Troubles me, but my trouble will not change  
 She conquers glances with a glance as queen  
 By her two eyes; great empire is in her eyes  
 Those bashful companions are imitating her  
 In her walk, and so acquire beauty by art  
 I have tasted need in my days and sweet in them 10  
 But I stayed not with colocynth or honey  
 Youth has surely shown me the spirit in my body  
 Gray hair has shown me the soul in my change  
 I came at night to the maid of a tribe returned  
 With a friend neither continent nor amorous  
 That night we put it off between our shoulders  
 But it knew nothing of complaint or kisses  
 So it went early and on it a bit of her perfume  
 On its hanger and scabbard and sheath cover  
 I earn recognition only by its striking 15  
 Or by the tip of the shaft's breast  
 The Emir presented it to me among his gifts  
 Adorned it and dressed me in armored suit  
 And from Ali ibn Abdullah is my knowledge of how  
 To carry it; who is like Abdullah or like Ali?  
 Giver of high breasted ones and short haired ones  
 Long backs, bright cutting and toughly pliant  
 Time and earth's face are too narrow for a king  
 Who fills time and shore and mountain  
 And we are in exultation and the Rum in fear 20  
 The land is busy and the sea is ashamed  
 From Taglib, conquerors of men, his origin comes  
 From Adi, the enemies of cravens and misers  
 But praise for Ibn Abu Hija that traces him to  
 The ignorant time is true weakness and sophism  
 Would that praises did justice to his virtues  
 As well as Kulaib or people of early times  
 Take what you see and leave what you hear of him  
 The sun's rising dispenses with Zuhal for you  
 You have found a range for speech that is wide 25  
 And if you find a tongue to speak then speak  
 The hero has the pride of humanity in him  
 Best of swords in the hand of the best state  
 Desires become prostrate before his perfection  
 He doesn't say to a thing: Would it were mine.  
 Observe when the two swords unite in the dust  
 The difference in them in nature and action  
 He is ready to be drawn against time's troubles  
 Prepared as the leader of the brave knights  
 The Arabs flee from him with the sand grouse  
 The Rum flee from him with the partridge  
 But there is no flight to mountains from lions  
 Ostriches run with him to the goat's refuge

He crosses mountain passes to beyond Kharshana  
 And retires from it but fear does not retire  
 Because each time the virgins dream among them  
 They will dream of captivity and camels  
 If you want them to pay tax they are as lavish  
 As you wish, for one-eye prefers the squints  
 I spoke your glory in my verses that went forth      35  
 O no pretence for what made no false claim  
 To east and west there are people whom we love  
 They study them and are the noblest envoys  
 They inform them that I because of his noble acts  
 Turn the vision between horsemen and servants  
 O most graciously benevolent in my direction  
 Thanks come from the gift and not from me  
 My sleep was only on top of my knowledge  
 That your thought cannot come into error      40  
 Raise, get, cross, charge, rise, cheer, teach  
 Add, speed, smile, please, come, laugh, give  
 Perhaps your criticism is good in its result  
 Often health of body comes with sickness  
 I have not heard, nor yet others, of one in power  
 Better shield against men of false speech  
 Your clemency is clemency which is not put on  
 Using eye shadow is not having fine eyes  
 You are bounteous without reproach or weariness  
 Without delay, or promises, or annoyance  
 The words of men do not turn you from generosity      45  
 Who can block the path of the raincloud?  
 You are brave when the horse no longer treads  
 On anything except armor and limbs and heads  
 And some of the lances return the blows of others  
 As if they argued with the souls of people  
 You do not stop hitting your enemies on all sides  
 Hastening aid while holding back with death.

198 When he recited this qasida they thought it very fine  
 and he said. (495)

This verse indeed among verses is an angel  
 It moves and is the sun and the world is sky  
 May the Merciful be just between it and us  
 Credit the words to me and the praise to you  
 And when it passes the ears of the envious  
 May it be among those that live and destroy.

199 And when he recited "Raise, get..." he saw them counting his words so he said. (495)

Raise, get, aid, guard, charge, rise, cheer, teach  
 Add, speed, smile, grant, forgive, come, laugh, give.

200 And he saw that they thought the number of letters  
was too much so he said. (495)

Live, stay, rise, rule, lead, give, bid, deny, plague,  
trust; joy, get  
Rage, shoot, hit, hold, war, take, scare; stop; feud,  
set, turn, give  
This prayer, when I am silent, I am content with  
For I prayed Allah for you and he granted it.

201 And he was present at the assembly of Saif al Daula  
in Shawwal in the year 341 and before him were  
oranges and dates and he was testing horsemen so he  
said to Ibn Jassh the Sheik al Missis: Don't sus-  
pect this as a drink. So he said. (496)

A very long way from an intoxicating drink  
Is the Indian orange or the fruit of the palm  
On the contrary everything here is sweet  
With you, from the smallest to the greatest  
Both the field of eloquence and the rhymes  
And the testing of the horsemen and horses.

202 And some of those present opposed al Mutanabbi in  
these verses and he said it was right for him to  
say: Far from you be the drink of drunkenness \*  
From oranges or the date palm / In place of striv-  
ing for the heights and lances \* And the earning of  
praise and beautiful renown / And encouraging the  
thoughts of the scholars in research \* And testing  
horsemen and horses. So Abu Tayyib said. (496)

I brought clear reasoning that is firm  
My speech was according to my intention  
But a word was opposed to this which was  
Like a woman in respect to her husband  
But this pearl is safe from the boring  
And you are a sword safe from dullness  
Nothing is sound to the understanding  
When daylight has need of a guide.

203 And he spoke in Dhu Qad of this year and a messenger  
from the king of Rum had arrived seeking a treaty.  
And slaves rode in with some game. And they dis-  
played the booty. They laid out a dead lioness and  
with her three cubs alive presented it to him. (496)

You have given the suppliants their hopes  
 And you have visited the enemy with death  
 The Rum have come walking on foot to you  
 Between the lions and their cubs  
 When they see the lions held prisoner  
 Where will they flee with their children?

204 And he spoke praising him and commemorating the letter of the king of Rum which had come to him. (497)

Your eyes are what the heart finds and found  
 In love things don't stay for me yet last  
 I was not one into whose heart love entered  
 But he who sees your eyelid must be in love  
 In joy and anger and nearness and distance  
 The range of the eyes' tears glitters  
 Sweetest love is what his lord suffers in union  
 And flight, for he always hopes and fears  
 Many a coquette's rage, intoxicated with youth, 5  
 I interceded with due to my tender age  
 Many a cool toothed sweet one bright in front  
 I veiled my mouth from so he kissed my hair  
 Many a gazelle long necked as your neck visited  
 But I could not tell adorned from unadorned  
 Not every one who loves is chaste, alone in my  
 Purity, or pleases love as riders meet in war  
 May Allah send rain to youth's days to rejoice in  
 And work the working of old Babylonian wine  
 When you wore the time with pleasure in it 10  
 You were torn off but the dress was not torn  
 I never saw the like of glances on parting day  
 That searched out every murder full of pity  
 They turn their eyes in perplexity, as if they  
 Were setting their eyes upon Zibaq  
 In the evening weeping prevents us from seeing  
 And fear of parting from pleasure of farewell  
 We say goodbye to them and separation is for us  
 Ibn Hija's spear in the battalion's heart  
 With deadly sharpness, even a web of David to it 15  
 When it strikes is like a spider's web  
 Guided to the kings of the armies as if it  
 Selected the souls of warriors and chose them  
 It strips off them every armor and shield  
 And crosses every wall and ditch to them  
 It is jealous of those between Lucan and Wasit  
 Is set up between the Forat and Jilliq  
 He brings it back crimson as if its sheath  
 Wept blood in pity for the broken ones  
 What I say cannot attain to him for he is brave 20  
 When jousting is mentioned its name is his  
 A striker whose fingers are in the sword's tip  
 A player with delicacy is in the word's edges

One begs of him as one asks a shower for drops  
 One blames him as one says to the sky: Gently!  
 You are so good that you are good to all faiths  
 And praise reaches you from every tongue  
 The king of Rum sees your joy in generosity  
 So he takes the position of a humble beggar  
 He abandons the Samhari lances as one reduced  
 To one more apt in jousting and more skillful  
 He wrote from a distant land whose targets  
 Are near to the fast horses round about you  
 From thence his messenger traveled your route  
 And he did not go except over split skulls  
 When he approached, the light of flashing steel  
 Glitteringly veiled for him his place  
 He drew near walking on carpets but did not know  
 Whether he went to a sea or climbed to a moon  
 The enemy cannot turn you away from their blood  
 With this sort of humility in affected words  
 And when you wrote him before this you were  
 Writing to him on the skull of a *Domesticus*  
 So if you gave him some *immunity*, he asked for it  
 If you gave the sword's edge, he was disgraced  
 Why should the cutting steel hold back from them  
 Prisoners as hostages or slaves as freedmen?  
 They come to drink at its edges like sand grouse  
 They pass before them line after line  
 I reached with Saif al Daula's light such degree  
 That I shine for those between east and west  
 When he wants to play with the beard of a fool  
 He shows him my dust and tells him truth  
 The grief of the jealous is not what I want  
 But yet he who opposes the sea will be drowned  
 The Emir examines common men in his wisdom  
 But closes his eyes at stupidity, knowingly  
 But turning away the glance of the eye is no use  
 When the glance of the eye cannot be silenced  
 O sought after one whose proximity is denied  
 O you who are forbid to those seeking support  
 O cowardly knights who attend him take heart  
 The bravest who quit him are afraid  
 When the enemy runs into the trap of his glory  
 His glory enraged is busy with his fortune  
 Evident excellence would not conquer the enemy  
 If there were no excess of joyful success.

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205 He came to him at night as he was testing a weapon  
 which was before him so he stopped and spoke. (504)

You told us of it but we did not see a weapon  
 It was as if you painted the moment of attack  
 When the helmets are arrayed over the armor  
 And one who sees it longs for the battle

If you were to put out your fire you could read  
 By this script in the darkest night  
 If the Domesticus saw its double edge  
 He would roll his eyes from trick to trick  
 You have approved it indeed here on the carpet  
 But it is better when girded on a man  
 Yet in it and in him there is something lacking  
 Unless you are their goal in perfection.

5

206 Some swords were presented to Saif al Daula and he  
 found among them one which was not gilded so he com-  
 manded that it be gilded and Abu Tayyib spoke. (505)

The best that steel colors itself with  
 Is blood and its dye is anger  
 Do not deform it with gold for  
 The temper does not gather in it nor flow.

207 He spoke when a man who was an astrologer of the  
 court sent to Saif al Daula some verses complaining  
 in them of poverty and saying that he had seen them  
 in sleep. (506)

We had heard of what you spoke in dreams  
 So we got for you a thousand dinars in sleep  
 But we woke up as you woke up without a thing  
 So the gift is according to the saying  
 Your eye was asleep as you were writing it  
 And why were you sleeping at the pen?  
 O one who complains when he sleeps of poverty  
 Sleep cannot exist along with poverty  
 Open your eyes and leave off speech in dreams  
 Prefer the words of the sword of humanity  
 Which no one can do without nor find any  
 Substitute for nor guard when it strikes  
 All his fathers were of noble race in the world  
 But he is the noblest of the noble.

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208 Saif al Daula ordered payment for some verses of Abu  
 Dharr Sahl ibn Muhammad the Katib in this meter and  
 form: O censurer stop blaming one whom \* The length  
 of his sickness and grief makes think / If you can  
 advise him then cure his sickness \* And help him by  
 touching the matter that makes him thirsty / Until  
 he says that you are the friend who \* Brings hope  
 to the violence of the times and to their looseness /  
 Or not, so let it be for nothing can relieve him \*  
 Of the length of blame and you are not his advisor /

I myself am ransom for one whom I have wronged by  
 my censure \* Of his love, not fearing any of his  
 guardians / The sun arises from the throne of his  
 face \* The moon rises from the expanse of his fore-  
 head. (506)

Censure of censurers is perplexity to my heart  
 Love of a darling is part of it in the core  
 Reproof complains in its heat of the ones blamed  
 And is frustrated when they oppose its pain  
 By my heart O censurer the king is one for whom  
 I grow angry at all men so as to content him  
 If he did not possess the hearts yet he would  
 Possess the times in heaven and his earth  
 The sun is one who envies him, and victory one of  
 His associates and the sword among his names  
 Where else are three of his three good qualities  
 His beauty, his ancestors and his sharpness?  
 Ages have passed and not brought the like of him  
 They come and are exhausted with watching him.

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209 And Saif al Daula asked for more so he spoke. (508)

The heart O censurer knows most about its illness  
 More worthy than you of its eyelid and tears  
 By one I love I do not rebel against you in love  
 Swearing by it and its beauty and elegance  
 Shall I love him and love the rebuke against him?  
 Indeed rebuke for him is from his enemies  
 The gossips are surprised at reviling and say:  
 Leave what we see you are too weak to hide  
 A friend is no other than one I love for his soul  
 And I see with an eye that sees not his equal  
 He who aids the passionate one in his grief  
 Is deserving of mercy's Lord and brotherhood  
 Go slowly for censure is one of his sicknesses  
 And be kindly for the ear is one of his parts  
 Grant that censure in its pleasure is like sleep  
 That is driven off by wakefulness and weeping  
 Do not be excusing the lover in his passion  
 So far as to find your heart in his heart  
 For the stricken one is stained with his tears  
 Like the corpse is sprinkled with his blood  
 Love is like the beloved whose presence is sweet  
 To one tested and receiving affliction  
 If you said to one very sick: I am ransom  
 For it, you would make him jealous of ransom  
 May the Emir be protected by loving eyes, for he  
 Is one who has no end of bravery and bounty  
 That captures an armored warrior with a glance  
 Intervenes between his heart and his glory

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I have called on you for aid in trouble often  
 He who heard was not called to his equal  
 You came from above the times and from beneath  
 Clashing, and from in front and from behind  
 He belongs to the sword since he is named for it  
 By its source and temper and trustiness  
 The steel was shaped and it was of his nature  
 And Ali was of the nature of his fathers.

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210 A messenger from Saif al Daula came in haste and with  
 him a paper on which were two verses about the con-  
 cealing of a secret. He asked him to complete them.  
 They were: Do you fear the divulging of the story  
 by me? \* But my joy is greater in hiding it / And  
 if I did not keep it out of pity for you \* I would  
 look upon myself as you do. And they are from Abbas  
 ibn al Ahnaf so Abu Tayyib spoke. (511)

Your pleasure is my pleasure as I have chosen it  
 Your secret my secret so why reveal it?  
 The manliness which guards is enough for you  
 The love which takes heed makes you safe  
 Your secret in my heart is like a corpse  
 When the secret is resurrected it is not known  
 It is as if my eyes transgressed with you  
 And hid from the heart what they saw  
 Telling secrets is a thing I do not recommend  
 It is fraud and a noble man is no fraud  
 Since I have the power over articulate speech  
 I have even more power over not speaking  
 I give my soul a free hand as I desire  
 And I control it when the lance grows red  
 Governments, O their sword, come by turns  
 Yours the command O best of those who command  
 Your messenger came to me in haste urgently  
 So I answered him with my stored up verses  
 And if it had been on a dark day of battle  
 My sword would have met him and a red horse  
 Destiny is never forgetful of its men  
 For you are the eye by which it sees.

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211 He spoke since Saif al Daula thought he was hesitant  
 in his praise and had changed for the worse on that  
 account. (512)

I see that this nearness is to be deviated from  
 And the long peace is to be abbreviated  
 Today you have abandoned me to shame and so  
 I die once, but another time I come alive

I steal a glance from you and am ashamed  
 And I rebuke the mare of my colt in secret  
 I know that when I make excuse to you  
 I must intend it as my excuse for excuse  
 I would deny your splendid generosity 5  
 If this were a matter for my choice  
 But care prevents the verses except for a few  
 And that prevents sleep except for dozing  
 But I do not make my body sick over that  
 And I do not light that fire in the heart  
 Do not compel me to the calamities of the time  
 To me it is evil and presses hard on me  
 Mine were scattered movings leading to you  
 They found no special home in the earth  
 Many a rhyme when it had moved from my mouth 10  
 Sprang over mountains and plunged across seas  
 And if men were created from their times  
 They would be the dark and you the light  
 I feel for you that which no poet ever said  
 And what no moon joyed in when it shone  
 The most eager of those rejoicing in bounty  
 Most wide ranging of those raiding a foe  
 My ambition rises through you above the heroes  
 And I do not count good fortune as luck  
 And he who has had you as a sea O Ali 15  
 Does not accept pearls unless they are huge.

212 Saif al Daula journeyed from Aleppo in the direction of Dyar Mudhar to stir up the bedouin there and he settled at Harran and took pledges from the Banu Uqail and Qushair and Ajalan and the plan for the campaign occurred to him there so he crossed the Forat to Duluk and Abu Tayyib spoke commemorating his route and his deeds in the last of Jumadi in the year 342. (514)

My nights after the girls' departure are fretful  
 The long ones and the nights of lovers are long  
 They show me a moon which I do not desire  
 And they hide a moon which has no way to it  
 And after the beloved I do not live consoled  
 But yet I must bear the calamities  
 Indeed one journey changed things between us  
 But death after that trip is another trip  
 If the perfume of the breeze was nearest to you 5  
 May neither gardens nor south wind leave  
 I have not choked on water except to remember  
 Water where the clan of the beloved settled  
 Flashing spear points defend it from above  
 There is no approach to it for the thirsty  
 Only in the wandering stars and the others  
 Is there guide for my eyes to dawn's light

Does not the night look at your eyes in my face  
 In which weakness and emaciation are manifest?  
 I met the splendid dawn at Darb al Qolla  
 My grief healed and night was a corpse there  
 A day it was as if its beauty was a token  
 You sent out, and the sun was your messenger  
 No lover before Saif al Daula has had revenge  
 Nor was vengeance taken on the darkness  
 But he has brought all of those rare things  
 To amaze with their rarity and to overcome  
 He hits the Darb of the foe on short-hair horses  
 And they do not know the arrows are horses  
 Tail upraised they go with lances like scorpions  
 They are happy beneath them and whinny  
 This is only a suggestion which occurs to him  
 At Harran, answered with spears and blades  
 A hero, whenever he desires he executes his will  
 With an army, heavy the tread of death in it  
 And horses whose running thins them in every land  
 After the late night stop there is no siesta  
 Thus when they fan out from Rum Duluk and Sanja  
 Pennants and squadrons scale every mountain  
 Over some paths there elevated above the roads  
 Among the gentlefolk their memory is obscure  
 They do not realize until they see them raiding  
 Hatefully, and yet their nature is handsome  
 Like clouds they are raining iron upon them  
 For every place is washed by the sword  
 And women captives lament in Arqa at evening  
 As if the bodices of the bereft were skirts  
 They return and those Mauzar think it a retreat  
 But not to them, rather the start of attack  
 They plunge into the blood of all, wading as if  
 They were surety for all blood not stepped in  
 The flames accompany them on every roadway  
 Where people are slain and homes in ruins  
 They attack again and pass the blood of Malatia  
 Malatia the mother bereft of children  
 They double the part of Qobaqib which they fill  
 And it seems as if its water were drunk up  
 They frighten the Forat's heart with us as if  
 The torrents fell on it because of the men  
 Every swimmer drives back the waves there  
 Equally, whether in depths or in the rain  
 It seems as if the water flows over their bodies  
 And their heads alone approach and the necks  
 In the valleys of Hinzit and Somnin, for sword  
 And lance head, substitutes for the dead  
 They appear among them and are recognized  
 Theirs a blaze unfading and leg markings  
 The towering fortresses yield to our long attack  
 And cast out to us their people and cease  
 They stay a night at Hisn al Ran, hoofs in pain  
 And all the proud weak beside the Emir

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And in every soul except his there is weariness  
 In every sword except him there is dullness  
 And before Somaisat were gorges and deserts  
 And unexplored ravines and valleys  
 They overtook darkness near the land of Marash  
 Great the ruin due to the Rum in the land  
 And when they saw him alone before his army  
 They knew all the world was redundant  
 And that Khatti lances were too short for him  
 That the Indian steel was dull against him  
 He slakes them with his steed's breast and sword  
 Hero whose courage is like bounteous gifts  
 Generous in any circumstance with all his wealth  
 But yet he is grudging to those in armor  
 He takes leave of their dead to pursue fugitives  
 With blows, so that round helmets are flat  
 In the heart of Constantine there was admiration  
 Though on his legs were his heavy chains  
 Perhaps some day O Domesticus you will return  
 Many a fugitive yet returns to him  
 You escaped with one of your souls wounded  
 And left behind another soul bleeding  
 You yielded to the Khatti your son as you fled  
 Can a friend rely on you in this world now?  
 By your face which let you forget him for blood  
 Your help for it was weeping and wailing  
 Did the size and front of the army confuse you?  
 Ali has a drink of armies and food  
 When there is no prey for the lion except one  
 He feeds no matter if you are an elephant  
 When jousting does not engage you for its bravery  
 Which is jousting, then blame cannot hold you  
 And if the days had been watching that attack  
 He would teach the days how to attack  
 Kings who are not named sharp are your ransom  
 For you are keen, polished on both edges  
 And if there is one who is Saif al Daula for men  
 Then among men there are also horns and drums  
 I am the winner guided to what I speak of him  
 When bombast is spoken before the speaking  
 There is nothing to the words of men who doubt me  
 By way of root, nor root to the speakers  
 I am hated for what is owed in love to a hero  
 I am calm but thoughts against me roam about  
 You heal all but the pain of envy since that  
 When it settles in a heart finds no changing  
 Do not expect friendship from the envious one  
 Even if you show it to him and make gifts  
 Indeed we have met misfortunes by ourselves  
 Many are the raids from them: small things  
 Despicable to us that our bodies are attacked  
 If only our honor and reason are safe  
 O pride and honor of Taglib's clan of Wa'il  
 You are the finest tribe of those who boast

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It will grieve Ali that his enemy must die  
 When ruin does not seize him with the lance  
 He is the partner of death when souls are plunder  
 So every death he does not cause is fraud  
 And if victory were given by lot it would be  
 For him who drinks death swiftly as he wins  
 For him who scorns the world in such an hour  
 Making the sword ring on the warrior's skull.

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213 And he was slow in his praise and they chided him  
 for that so he spoke excusing himself. (522)

By the least smile from you nature is revived  
 And the limbs of the weak body strengthened  
 Who can pay for your worth in its entirety  
 Who can be content except he who is lenient?  
 Indeed you accepted an easy excuse magnanimously  
 My excuse is no matter beside it though plain  
 It is impossible, if life is with you, that I see  
 That your body be sick and my body healthy  
 The neglecting of the verses is only because  
 Praise falls short of description of the Emir.

214 He spoke and Saif al Daula was suffering from an ab-  
 cess in the year 342. (523)

Does what frightens you know who is being hurt  
 And why misfortune scales this heaven?  
 Your body is above the aim of every disease  
 The nearness of the least of it is a miracle  
 Time has given caresses in love and passion  
 But the beloved has suffered from the kiss  
 How could the world make you sick in any way  
 When you are doctor to the world's ills?  
 And how could complaint afflict you with disease  
 When you are saviour when affliction comes?  
 You wearied of staying a day in which there was  
 No real jousting and no blood flowing  
 You are the king whose heart may become ill  
 With his ambition which only war can heal  
 What troubles you is your love of seeing those  
 Whose dust is stirred up by their legs  
 White legged they take the land of the enemy  
 The nose and the sides are for the spear  
 Loosen the reins of these who want to return  
 For the distant which they seek is near  
 Since it is an illness Hippocrates erred about  
 The like was not known to his disciples  
 By Saif al Daula's brightness my eyelids  
 Are struck, under a sun which does not set

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He wars on those who war and in him is my power  
 He aims at attackers and by him I am hit  
 The envious are excused in their greediness  
 At my sight of him, even though they melt  
 For I have certainly arrived at a place where  
 The heart envies the apple of the eye.

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215 Saif al Daula said that the envoy of the Greeks was happy at his sickness so Abu Tayyib spoke. (525)

You are ransomed by what this envoy rejoices in  
 For you are healthy in that and not ailing  
 The end of this is that you grieve the enemy  
 And are firm against them and it ceases.

216 And he spoke about him when he complained about the abcess that troubled him. (525)

When Saif al Daula is sick the land is sick  
 And what is above it, men and pure bounty  
 How shall I make any use of sleep since  
 In his sickness, sleep is illness to the eyes  
 He heals you who heals his people by your bounty  
 For you are the sea of which every sea is part.

217 He spoke when Saif al Daula regained his health.  
 (526)

Glory and liberality recovered when you recovered  
 Grief ceased from you and went to the enemy  
 War has become healthy in your health and bounty  
 Rejoices in it, and continuous showers pour  
 Light which had departed has returned to the sun  
 As if its loss were sickness to her body  
 Your lightning gleams for me from royal lips  
 Showers do not fall except where he smiles  
 He is called a sword but it is no comparison  
 How can a slave be compared to the master?  
 The Arabs are unique in the world by his race  
 Persians share with Arabs in his goodness  
 And Allah is sincere with Islam through his help  
 Even if the nations change by his graces  
 I do not say that joy in health is yours alone  
 When you are safe then all men become safe.

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218 And he spoke praising him at the conclusion of the

month of Ramadan in 342. (527)

Fasting and breaking fast, holiday and the times  
 Find their light in you as do the sun and moon  
 His gifts seem the crescent moon turned to all  
 Nor is any man favored by them beyond that  
 The times with you are only an untouched garden  
 O you whose character blossoms in this age  
 Generosity does not end for you in these days  
 May life not end for you in its years  
 Your joy in their returning is unexcelled  
 Joy of others in them, gray hair and old age.

219 He spoke and the river Quwaiq, a river near Aleppo,  
 rose and surrounded the home of Saif al Daula. (527)

A sea that is less than he has veiled this sea  
 Men disapprove it and pay homage to him  
 O water why do you envy us his flowing  
 Or do you want to appear his equal?  
 Or do you seek the wealth of his right hand or  
 Visit him to increase his courtiers' number?  
 Or do you come as a moat for his fortress?  
 But the lance and horse are enough for him  
 O many a tide they have used for his boats  
 Many a far meadow laid waste for his asses  
 Many a mad one they drove off in his madness  
 Many a drinker of a cup made scream often  
 They have been changing his song to groans  
 There is many a lion whose lair he enters  
 Many a king whose forehead he tramples  
 Leading them to sleepless eyelids  
 Bring good news of his affairs in person  
 Overcoming his opponents by his jousting  
 Chaste as to what his garments keep secure  
 Bright as to what is in his turban trusted  
 He is sea, all the seas only fish to him  
 He is a sun, the sun wishes she were him  
 O sword if you claim to want to help him  
 He answers before you finish the sin  
 May his competency outlast his enemies  
 Who guards himself and his religion from them.

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220 He spoke praising him and honoring him on the feast  
 of sacrifices in 342. (529)

For every man in his time something he prefers  
 Jousting the enemy is Saif al Daula's skill  
 And refuting rumors against him with the opposite  
 And being happier than his enemies intended

Many intending to hinder him, hinder themselves  
 Army leaders against him make gifts unguided  
 Many a proud one not knowing Allah for a moment  
 Saw his sword in his hand and converted  
 He is the sea: dive there when it is quiet  
 For pearls, but beware when the surf is up  
 I have seen the sea overwhelm a young men  
 But this that comes to a youth has an aim  
 The kings of the earth remain submissive to him  
 They go from his to ruin and meet him prone  
 The sword and the spear revive his wealth  
 But a smile and generosity kill what revives  
 Astute, the vanguard of his eye suspects it  
 His heart knows today what he sees tomorrow  
 He gets his horsemen through difficult places  
 Even if the sun's horn had water he'd get it  
 On this basis a son of Domesticus called his day  
 Dying, and the Domesticus called his birth  
 You traveled to Jaihan from the land of Amid  
 In three nights riding took you near and far  
 He turned and gave you his son and his armies  
 All, but he did not give it all for praise  
 You towered between his vision and life  
 He saw the sword of Allah in you unsheathed  
 The blue of the lance sought no one but him  
 But Constantine was the ransom for him  
 He came to put on the monk's robe out of fear  
 He had once put on the linked coat of mail  
 A cane helped him walk penitent in a monastery  
 Not content to go with a short haired sorrel  
 And he did not repent till attacks left his face  
 Wounded, and dust left his eyelids sick  
 And if he could escape from Ali by being a monk  
 Kings would be monks in pairs and singly  
 And every man in the east and west after this  
 Would have made a black hair robe for himself  
 The feast whose festival you are honors you  
 Rite for all who pray, sacrifice and rejoice  
 May festivals remain as robes for you after this  
 You return them worn and are given new ones  
 This day among days is like you among men  
 You are sole among them as it is unique  
 It is chance if an eye is favored over its sister  
 And when one day is lord over the others  
 But O wonder of a ruler of whom you are the sword  
 Does he not fear edges he has girded one?  
 And he who makes a lion a hawk to hunt with  
 The lion will hunt as other things he hunts  
 I have known you as pure clemency in pure power  
 If you wished your clemency could be steel  
 But nothing kills free men like forgiving them  
 But what free man of yours remembers gifts?  
 When you honor a good man you possess him  
 When you are good to the vile he rebels

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Putting bounty in a sword's place for the high 30  
 Harms like setting sword in bounty's place  
 But you excel men in wisdom and knowledge  
 As you excel them in state, soul and lineage  
 What you do is too subtle for thinking  
 One leaves the hid and takes the apparent  
 End the envy of the jealous by flattening him  
 You are the one who made them envious of me  
 If your good idea of my hand strengthens my arm  
 I will strike with sheathed blade to lop heads  
 I am only a Samhari spear that you carry 35  
 It adorns upright but strikes fear leveled  
 Time is only one of the recounters of my beads  
 When I speak a verse the age comes to sing it  
 He runs with it who goes with ungirt loins  
 He sings it who has never sung a song  
 Pay me whenever you have my verses recited for  
 By my verses the eulogists come repeatedly  
 Disregard every voice except my voice for I  
 Am the speaker told about and others echo 40  
 I left night trips for one whose wealth is small  
 And shod my horse with your gifts of pure gold  
 I chained myself to your protection with love  
 He who finds good a chain is chained indeed  
 When a man inquires of his times for wealth and  
 You are absent they make appointment with you.

221 There was a discussion between the Arabs and the  
 Kurds concerning precedence so Saif al Daula said:  
 What do you say about this? Give your opinion O  
 Abu Tayyib. So he spoke. (535)

If you ask about the best of men  
 Then the best of most of them is virtue  
 Who are you among them O hero of Wa'il?  
 The first of the jousters in battle  
 The censurers of those who censure bounty  
 Have excelled the tribes by your merit.

222 He spoke as the envoy of the King of Rum came to  
 Saif al Daula in Sefer 343. (536)

Evil of this day has a name before its appearance  
 But description is not true until vision tests  
 The army herded together until it found no way  
 Than to your carpet; I heard but did not see  
 I was present to a select group but I was absent  
 As to seeing, yet my eyes reported all of it  
 Today the king of the Rum raises his vision  
 Since your pardon to him is a victory for him

And if you answer anything to his letter  
 There will be no end to the king's boasting  
 His guards now think of resting for a moment  
 From swords, but other peoples await them still  
 You have exchanged them for other nations  
 So people's heads may multiply and necks  
 The comparison of your bounty to morning rain is  
 Double bounty to your hand for rain has it too  
 The sun receives its light from you upon rising  
 Just as the moon receives its light from her.

223 And he spoke also after the entrance of the envoy of  
 the Rum to him. (537)

Armor for the king of the Rum is this letter  
 He defends himself with it and keeps you busy  
 It is thick chain mail for him, and its words  
 Fulsome praise for you and attainment  
 How could this messenger get through his country  
 When dust you stirred up hasn't settled?  
 From which pools did he water his fine steeds?  
 None of the springs are pure of bloody mix  
 He comes to you, almost the head disowns neck  
 And the muscles cut it off from fear  
 He takes the stance of a soldier in his movement  
 To you, except when the trembling distorts it  
 Due to this they split his eyes and his vision  
 Your name and the friend that does not cease  
 He sees in you his bounty and bounty is desired  
 He sees in that death and death is dreadful  
 He kissed the sleeve, kissed the dust before it  
 And all the warriors stand withdrawn  
 Happiest of lovers, most successful of clients  
 Is a hero who attains to kissing your sleeve  
 A place his lips long for, but in front of it  
 Breasts of war horses and flexible lances  
 For nobility will not achieve what it desires  
 Of you, yet a client is not rejected by you  
 And greater ones than him in ambition, the enemy  
 Has sent you and armies have waited for it  
 He comes forward from among companions as envoy  
 And returns to his companions critical  
 The descendant of Rabia perplexes with a sword  
 The Merciful formed it and glory polished it  
 Those eyes cannot attain to the color of it  
 Nor can those fingers test the edge of it  
 When messengers see you their souls are shamed  
 By it and what is brought with them  
 The Rum beseech one whom all their gifts are from  
 But they do not seek rancour from him  
 And if fear of death and imprisonment drove them  
 They act now as dead men and prisoners act

They fear you so that death is no gain over it 20  
 And they come to you so chains add nothing  
 I see all of those having royalty coming to you  
 As if you were the sea and kings rivers  
 When clouds give rain from themselves and you  
 Their showers are dew and your dew showers  
 Noble man, you give that on which you ride  
 And war rages for you and you are attacker  
 O give of the bounty to men whom you own  
 But never give to men what I am speaker of  
 Is not every day under my armpit a little poet 25  
 A weakling he heartens me, short he stretches  
 My tongue in speaking is silent to avoid him  
 My heart in silence laughs jesting with him  
 I tire of one who calls if you don't answer him  
 I rage at one who offends if you aren't like  
 Pride is not my habit with them except that I,  
 I hate the fool and the sophist  
 My greatest pride is that I can trust in you  
 My greatest wealth is that I can hope in you 30  
 Perhaps the noble Saif al Daula will permit  
 Truth to come alive and vanity destroyed  
 I aimed at his foes with my verse and his merit  
 And they were raided who surrendered beaten  
 Indeed they think that the stars are immortal but  
 If they make war on him their bereaved wail  
 Nor would the nearest be his if he wanted them  
 Or the easiest if he wanted to get them  
 All things distant for men are near for him  
 When the herd of horses are veiled in dust  
 His hand rules the east and west of the earth 35  
 No time when it is not busy with bounty  
 His thoughts follow the fugitives among men  
 He who flees in war has ruin facing him  
 And he who flees his good work envious of him  
 Meets some of it wherever his gifts are sent  
 Hero whose goodness though perfect he sees as not  
 Perfect, until it is seen as all enveloping  
 When the Arabs of the Arabs consider themselves  
 Then you are their hero and chieftain king 40  
 They submit to you in their souls and behave  
 At your command, as tribes gather around you  
 And all of the joints of the lance support it  
 Yet only the point can pierce the knight  
 I see you, if jousting did not win in battle for  
 You, yielding as good qualities gain it  
 He who does not learn submission to you himself  
 Swords will let him learn from all men.

224 And Saif al Daula sent to Abu Tayyib the words of  
 the poet: I will be thankful all my life if my  
 death is an easy one \* My hands are not greedy even

if they are strong / A youth does not keep his wealth  
 from his friend \* And does not show his complaint  
 when his soles are worn out / He sees my need in the  
 place where it is hidden \* And it is a mote in his  
 eye, until he comes out. And he asked him to add to  
 them so he spoke and the messenger stood by. (542)

Ours a king whose purpose does not savor sleep  
 Death to the living or life to the dead  
 Too great for his eyes to be troubled by motes  
 Whenever poverty shows itself to you it flees  
 Allah reward Saif al Daula Hashimi for my sake  
 For his great bounty is my sword and my state.

225 He spoke commemorating the attack on the Banu Kilab  
 in the last of Jumadi 343. (543)

When others than you rule the wolves will play  
 When others strike the sword will be dull  
 You possess the souls of jinn and men completely  
 How should the Kilab obtain their souls?  
 They do not leave you in rebellion but rather  
 The drinkers loathe the drink of death  
 You sought them at the watering places until  
 The cloud feared you were seeking it  
 You spent the nights without sleep in them  
 The marked Arab steeds trotted with you  
 The army shakes its flanks around you  
 Like the eagle ruffles its wings  
 You inquired of the desert about them until  
 Some responded to you and were an answer  
 He fought apart from sacred things as they fled  
 A bounty of your hand and near relationship  
 And your care for them as descendants of Ma'ad  
 And they were kindred and friends  
 You desisted from the steel of the lance and  
 Hill passes choked with their women on camels  
 They let fall the babies on the camel rugs  
 Male and female young of camels dropped  
 And Amr became an emigrant on their right  
 And Ka'ab was a bone joint on their left  
 Abu Bakr became ashamed of its sons  
 And Quariza and Thebab were blushing at them  
 Whenever you follow the tracks of a people  
 The skulls and the heads are left behind  
 Women returned as if they partook of noble acts  
 With their necklaces and charms upon them  
 They were firm in thanks for what you gave  
 But where is the reward for what he gives?  
 Nor was their journey to you disgraceful  
 Nor their protection by you any censure

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Nor in their loss of the Banu Kilab  
 Any forsaking when they saw your brightness  
 How could your valor toward men have an end  
 In subduing them if victory pains you?  
 You are well disposed, O my lord, toward them  
 But pity for culprits is blameworthy  
 They are your servants wherever they are  
 When you call to action they should answer  
 They are real transgressors but they are not  
 The first people to err and repent  
 You are their life that becomes angry with them  
 And abandonment of life for them is the end  
 Your gifts are not unknown to the bedouin  
 But yet many times the effect is hidden  
 Many a sin has its birth from misguidance  
 Often a sin is born from being too close  
 The foolish people commit many a crime  
 And penalty settles with those not criminal  
 And if they fear Ali in their crimes  
 He who fears must trust in Ali indeed  
 And if Saif al Daula is not of Qais  
 Yet from him is Qais' strength and garments  
 And under his cloud they grow and flourish  
 And in his times they increase and do well  
 And under his banner they beat the enemy  
 And fierce Arabs submit to them  
 If another than the Emir made war on Kilab  
 Mists would turn him from their suns  
 He meets the enemy outside of the guard stones  
 Where the ravens meet the wolves  
 And horses that are fed on winds of the desert  
 The mirage is enough water for them  
 And yet their lord comes at night to them  
 No use waiting or escaping  
 Neither night can cover them nor yet the day  
 Nor horses bear them away nor yet camels  
 You charge upon them with a sea of iron  
 That leaves behind them waves on the land  
 He comes at evening and their carpets are silk  
 And with the dawning their carpets are dust  
 And that which he has in his hand is their spear  
 As the coloring on his hands is theirs  
 Sons of those your father killed in Nejd's land  
 One remained and a short spear preserved him  
 He forgave them and spared their little ones  
 And on necks of most of them were necklaces  
 And all of you did what his father did  
 And all of your actions were just as amazing  
 So may it be if one seeks the enemy  
 Likewise may your joy be in attainment.

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the border fortress of Hadath and its besieging by battalions of the Rum army in 343. (548)

In proportion to people of will firmness comes  
 Nobles acts come in proportion to the generous  
 Littleness seems great to eyes of little people  
 Greatness seems small to eyes of the great  
 Saif al Daula loads the army with his ambition  
 And these vast forces are exhausted by him  
 He seeks from men what he is himself and that  
 Is something which even lions do not demand  
 The longest lived birds ransom his weapons 5  
 The young and old eagles of the desert  
 Being born with no claws does not worry them  
 For his swords and their hilts are created  
 Does al Hadath the red understand her color  
 Does she know which of two cupbearers is cloud?  
 Bright clouds poured out for her before his attack  
 When he approached her, skulls poured for her  
 He founded and raised her and spear struck spear  
 And waves of death pounded around her  
 There was a kind of insanity in it but it endured 10  
 And corpses of the dead were charms upon it  
 Outcasts of fate, it drove it but you returned it  
 To faith with Khatti lances in spite of fate  
 You make the nights lose all they have taken  
 When they take from you they are still debtors  
 When you intend a verb in the future tense  
 It is past before you put the jasm to it  
 How could Rum and Russians hope to destroy it  
 When such strokes were its base and supports?  
 They gave it a summons but the fates were judges 15  
 No wronged one died nor criminal lived  
 They came to you dragging their irons as if they  
 Traveled at night on horses without feet  
 When they flashed, their swords were not seen  
 For their armor and helmets were the same  
 A host, its push from eastern lands and west  
 And in the ears of Jawzi a humming from them  
 Every nation and tongue was gathered there  
 But only interpreters understood the speakers  
 By Allah it was a time when fire melted a coward 20  
 Nothing remained except the sword or the lion  
 What could not cut armor and spear was cut to bits  
 Those who did not strike fled from the knights  
 You stood and death was not doubtful for the firm  
 As if you were on an eyelid of dozing death  
 The heroes passed by you wounded and in flight  
 But your face was clear and your lips smiling  
 You exceeded the limit of bravery and reason  
 So people said: You know the unseen!  
 You pressed their two wings strong over the heart 25  
 Pin feathers died underneath and pinions

With a blow that hits skulls and victory not yet  
 And goes to the breast as victory advanced  
 You scorned the Rudaini so you threw them away  
 So that the sword was abusing the spear  
 He who seeks glorious victory indeed has  
 His keys in the bright, light sword blades  
 You scattered them over Uhaidab altogether  
 As dirhams are scattered over the bride  
 Your horses trample on the nests on the peaks 30  
 And the carrion increases around the nests  
 The nestlings of the eagle think you visit them  
 With their mothers, but they are strong steeds  
 When they slip you make them go on their bellies  
 Like the snakes slither on the surface  
 Is the Domesticus advancing every day  
 With his neck blaming his face for progress?  
 Does he deny a smell of lion until he tastes it?  
 Even beasts know that odor of the lion  
 Surely in his son, his brother-in-law and his son 35  
 The fearful attack of the Emir pained him  
 He went thanking friends for his escape from edge  
 As their skulls and wrists kept them busy  
 He knows the sound of the Mashrafi on them  
 Though sound of sword is foreign speech  
 Happy, not ignorantly, with what he gave you but  
 Though plundered, he escaped you as spoiler  
 You are not a king putting to flight your equal  
 But rather monotheism pursuing the polytheists  
 Adnan excels in this, not just Rabia 40  
 The world is honored by it, not the capitals  
 Yours the praise for a pearl whose word is mine  
 For you are the giver and I the arranger  
 Indeed your gift runs with me in the battle  
 I cannot be criticized nor you be sorry  
 On every flight thither with his legs  
 When the war cries strike his ears  
 O sword which has never been sheathed O  
 No doubt in it nor safeguard against it  
 Rejoice in striking skulls, glory and eminence 45  
 Your devotees and Islam make you safe  
 Why should not the Merciful guard your edges sure  
 His splitting enemies' skulls by you goes on.

227 He spoke and knights of the border arrived and with  
 them a messenger from the Emperor of Rum asking for  
 a truce. (556)

Does a great king inspire fear thus in all men  
 Does a cloud rain kings' messengers for him?  
 And the world submit to him and given a seat  
 While the days stand by as he desires?

When Saif al Daula visits the Rum in war  
 A sally is enough for them if enough for him  
 A youth, the times follow his steps among men  
 At every moment the reins are in his hands  
 The messengers sleep safe and content with him  
 But eyelids of a messenger's lord do not sleep  
 Guarding against unexpected barebacked horses  
 Scornful of jousting having no bridle  
 They turn there and their manes are reins  
 Whipped on there, and the lash is a word  
 And noble horses are of no use nor yet the lance  
 If there is no nobility seated on nobleness  
 How long do you deny messengers what they want  
 As if they were blamed insofar as you give?  
 If you are not given their fealty in submission  
 Yet an enemy's refuge with bounty is fealty  
 And indeed souls that come to you are protected  
 And the blood that hopes in you is sacred  
 When a king fears a king you stand by him  
 They fear your sword and you agree to defend  
 You make a rout for them with the light swords  
 And a press about you with flattering letters  
 The sweets of life confuse their hearts  
 They choose part of life and this is death  
 The worst of two swift deaths is a living  
 That demeans one who chooses and overcomes  
 So if there is peace that is without intercession  
 Yet it is a humiliation for them and shame  
 It's a favor to the border knights for their sake  
 To do for them what they could hardly aim at  
 The horsemen approach humbly and move forward  
 If they weren't so fearful they'd be cowards  
 Their horses were fed formerly in your courtyards  
 They fed, horses swam in your bounty and they  
 At your blessed appearance in every battle  
 Prayers were sent by them and greeting  
 And all men followed their leadership  
 And you were leader of people of noble acts  
 Many an answer to the letters you dispatched  
 And its title for readers was in dust clouds  
 The desert too narrow for it before its unfolding  
 Nor was the seal of it broken in the desert  
 The letters of its alphabet of men were three  
 Fine steeds and supple lances and swords  
 O the war which you followed now has its moment  
 For sheathing blade or loosing saddle girth  
 And if life of the lance is lengthened by truce  
 Yet those that live with you have only a year  
 You still destroy the dark ones and they are many  
 And destroy with them armies and they are huge  
 When the roamers return you return to their land  
 And there are necks for the sword and skulls  
 They raise their children for you till you attack  
 Daughters high breasted and boys full grown

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The rivals contend with you until they reach  
 The utmost goal, and you run and they stand  
 For there is no light in the sun when you shine  
 No fullness in the moon when you are full.

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228 He spoke commemorating the campaign of Saif al Daula  
 against the Banu Uqail and Qushair and Ajalan and  
 Kilab when they made trouble in the sphere of his  
 influence and he turned toward them and he destroyed  
 some of them and pardoned others who were favorable  
 to him according to their assistance and opposition.  
 to meeting him in 344. (559)

I remember what happened between Uthayib and Baraq  
 At jousting our lances and running the winners  
 And companies of people who sacrificed their prey  
 With fragments they broke on the hair parting  
 And nights when we slept with Thewiyya beneath  
 As if its dust were amber on the cushions  
 When the pebbles of this land's dust are taken  
 To beauties elsewhere they are set in collars  
 A pretty girl poured for me there the Qutrobbal  
 A shine of faith over her deceitful promise  
 Drowsiness in the eyes and sunlight in a glance  
 Sickness for the body and musk to the nose  
 A slender youth, every wise one loves his soul  
 Chastely and every lewd one loves his body  
 Well educated, each time he touches lute strings  
 He makes each ear deaf except for them  
 He tells of the times of Ad and of his own times  
 His curls on a boy's adolescent cheeks  
 There is no beauty of face to distinguish a youth  
 When it is not in his acts and character  
 There is no city for man except what suits him  
 Nor family closeness without friends  
 It is a gift, the call of the beloved and of love  
 If not, the words of a hypocrite are not hid  
 By my truth! to whom did Uqail yield in death  
 To the enemy's joy and the creator's wrath?  
 They enticed Ali with that which exhausts men  
 And spread out the ruin of the vast army  
 They did not lay a hand on anything not sharp  
 Nor bear a head to anything not splitting  
 They had gone on had they met no one to stop them  
 They had fled had they met no one to pursue  
 When he dressed Ka'ab with garments they rebelled  
 He tore each robe to shreds with the spears  
 And when he poured showers which they rejected  
 He poured other things with other flashes  
 Want did not hurt from hand of forbiddance as much  
 As privation from the hand of the giver

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He came with them in the midst of dust and lances  
Their hooves filled the hollows of their eyes  
Dark ones, dried sweat on their girths as jewels  
And they were belts on their middles  
Would that Abu Hija could see beyond Tadmor  
The long lances on the broad plains  
And Ali's driving those of Ma'ad and other  
Tribes, who never turned a neck to pursuer  
Qushair and Ajalon were of them in small number  
Like r's in a word the speaker mispronounces  
The women leave them alone without separation  
And they leave the women alone without divorce  
He brightens what is between warrior and them  
With thrusts, his heat diverts every lover  
He comes to the women when blood no longer flies  
From horses, except on breasts of the girls  
On every desert whose land rejects mankind  
Are women in red garments and on red camels  
And there are the squadrons of Saif of Rabia  
Pebbles cry at them with the cry of cranes  
Far the spear points from the shaft ends  
Thick under the helmet the collar dust  
His bounty forbids and enriches them with booty  
And they desire only the defense of their own  
The Arab imagines the assault as easy  
The desert reminds him of the awning shade  
You remind them of water at the time when  
The Samawa of Kalb in all its pride was dusty  
They were afraid of kings coming to the desert  
And that green scum would grow in water holes  
They roused you, guided in a desert by its stars  
And they made tents of the ostrich nests  
More patient of its water than the lizards  
More used than they to heat on the eyes  
There was grumbling among camels as you left them  
With tail hair cut and with silent uvula  
They did not avert your horses from rest after run  
But desert keeps them from crossing high peaks  
They did not prevent spearheads with their hearts  
From being stuck in earth, or from Rumi hearts  
Did they not note deformity that deforms an enemy  
And makes lions' paws into little rabbits' paws?  
They had seen him with others and many a time  
He showed rebels in war struck down as rebels  
His horses are used to not eating dry barley  
When skulls did not raise the feed bag's mouth  
Nor do they relish the pools except their waters  
Have some blood, like myrtle under roses  
The tribe of Numair was more guided than they  
They drove howdahed women like a wild ass herd  
They prepared lances of submission and jousts  
An army with them to turn the edge of force  
I see none shoot better than he unless by trick  
Nor luckier with the enemy unless deceiving

The huge catapults are overwhelmed by his hand  
 Lightly, and it wears out the crossbow's bow.

229 And he spoke describing his attack on these tribes.  
 (568)

The long lances that you thrust are too short  
 And your drops in bounty and battle are oceans  
 There is clemency in you when a felon does evil  
 He thinks it generosity but it is scorn  
 And firmness to the townspeople and the bedouin  
 With a restraint that Nizar is not used to  
 They sniff the smell of men like beasts  
 And reject it and timidity disgraces them  
 They are not led at any time by others than you  
 And they know neither yielding nor submission  
 Because the lead rope galls their necks  
 And that bridle pulls at their cheeks  
 Restraint in regard to them gave desires to Amr  
 And your patience and reserve made them hasty  
 And the messages and complaints changed them  
 And the preparations and raids amazed them  
 And horses for whom bridles are too weak  
 And horsemen for whom the camp is too narrow  
 And they are in expectation of their death 5  
 Souls on whose death you are consulting  
 You were the sword whose hilt was for them  
 And your edge and point against the enemy  
 And its double edge was lodged at Badia  
 And Hiyar was behind its hilt  
 And the Banu Kilab were in Ka'ab's territory  
 And they were afraid to be where they were  
 They met the power of their lord with submission  
 And traveled to the Banu Ka'ab who came also  
 He busies them with the high meadows 10  
 Lean, they are not skinny nor yet fat  
 They climb to Salamya in a dust cloud, but for  
 Landmarks you'd not know what is beneath  
 What a dust! the eagles struggle with it  
 As if the air were sandy desert of dirt  
 Jouesting goes between pairs of cheating horses  
 As if death were rushing between them  
 Urgency presses them to the fighting  
 Their only defense there is flight  
 They run, their legs trying to get ahead of 15  
 Their heads, as the distress of their legs  
 He drives them with every lean high horse  
 To his knights on the choice horses  
 And every hard one quivers along its length  
 As its double edge the blood flows freely  
 It leaves everything coiled around it  
 And its breast has a hole for its fox 20

When the day drives the light from them  
 Double night darkens; dust and evening  
 If the wing of darkness sweeps away from them  
 The day and the Mashrafi flash out  
 Behind them the flocks weep: the wailing  
 Crumbling or bleating or bellowing  
 Covering the desert with dust until  
 Nursing dams and pregnant are excited  
 They passed by Joba and there a cloak of dust  
 Enveloped both of the armies  
 They came to a sandy plain without saddles  
 And the turbans and the veils fell off  
 And they had loaded up the young fillies behind  
 But very little girls were trampled down  
 And Awaira was drunk dry so there was no Awaira  
 And so with Nahya and Buaiyatha and Jivar  
 And they sought no refuge except in Tadmor  
 But Tadmor, like its name, was ruin for them  
 Then intended to change the plan there  
 But dawn came for them with a plan unchanging  
 And an army, everywhere they return in the land  
 And it came as they came to it confounded  
 He surrounded them nobly, no reprisal for him  
 No blood money to be paid and no excuse  
 His swords dripped the blood of the enemy  
 All blood they dripped free of revenge  
 They were lions that did not have strength  
 To fly, and they had no wings  
 When they escaped the spears, the desert  
 Reached them with spears of thirst  
 They see death before and behind  
 And they choose, and death is necessary  
 When he goes through Samawa there is no guide  
 Their dead to his eyes are sign posts  
 But if he did not stay a remnant would not live  
 In the past for those who remain as a lesson  
 If their lord does not take care of them  
 Who will be for them and be jealous for them?  
 He differs from them in character  
 But ancestry unites him and them  
 And he turned then to Arak and Urdhi  
 And the people of the Raqqas had a visit  
 The Banu Numair took fright at the Forat  
 And the roar that they roared was a bellow  
 And they were a herd on the Khabur prostrate  
 Drunk with the drink that was for others  
 They did not send out their flocks in the morning  
 Nor was fire lit in their night  
 Wary of the youth who was discontent with them  
 But there was no need of caution for them  
 Their chiefs spent the night traveling to him  
 And found him indulgent to what they asked  
 He granted them life by returning their swords  
 And their heads were his though bare

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They were among those who swore fealty to him  
 Of noblest stock and reckoned the finest 50  
 Thus he made a dawn of quiet in the region  
 But no stagnation in the sea of giving  
 And his memory beamed through all the land  
 And the wine was sent round with song  
 The tribes fell down prostrate to him  
 And the spears and the blades praised him  
 As if the rays of the sun's center were in him  
 And in our eyes there was a defeat by him  
 He who seeks jousting is Ali alone 55  
 The horses are Allah's and lances thirsty  
 Men see him wherever Ka'ab saw him  
 In the land where his attack had no veil  
 He was in the midst of the waste land every day  
 Seeking jousting not waiting  
 His horses whinny in response to each other  
 It is the horses' nature to be secret  
 Banu Ka'ab and the impression you had on them  
 Is a hand that only a bracelet bloodies  
 For them by his strokes there is pain and loss 60  
 For them in his glory there is honor  
 Theirs is a right by sharing with you in Nizar  
 Closer sharing in a root of neighborhood  
 Mayhap their sons and your sons can be soldiers  
 The first five year olds are foals  
 You are best of those who if thwarted destroy  
 Most forgiving to those whose end is ruin  
 You are strongest of those whom victory spurs  
 Most forbearing of those power makes clement 65  
 And there is no blame in the attack of the lord  
 Nor shame in the submission of the servant.

230 And he spoke bidding him farewell as he was going on  
 a journey to his estate. (576)

O archer who hits the heart that is aimed at  
 You increase wealth with feathers on arrows  
 I travel to his estate in his garments  
 On his horse from his palace with his sword  
 What a shower of swords and spears he gives me  
 And Rumi slaves in the shower of his cloud  
 A youth who gives regions of flocks and villages  
 And his horsemen and fine things in them  
 And he makes his gifts from whatever I fancy 5  
 As payment when I fancy some of his words  
 May the sun which is in his heaven not cease  
 With the rising sun under his veil  
 May the moon not cease to grow with his face  
 Amazed at their waning and at his fullness.

231 And he spoke at Aleppo offering him condolences for his younger sister and consoling him with his remaining elder sister in the month of Ramadan in the year 344. (577)

If patience in one who has great grief is virtue  
 You are most virtuous, strong and glorious  
 O you are superior to the weakness of a lover  
 Are above one who strengthens you with reason  
 And by your words he is guided to strengthen you  
 Speaking what you spoke to him beforehand  
 You have experienced things both bitter and sweet  
 And trod paths of days rough and smooth  
 You struggled with time in knowledge, and there 5  
 Were no strange words and no new actions  
 I find grief in you patient and rational but  
 I see it in the world as fear and ignorance  
 You had a friend that brought it on and whenever  
 The root is fine it is a friend's root  
 Loyalty is a thing you have grown up in, and yet  
 Your family is still familiar with loyalty  
 The good of tears as a help is in the tear  
 That patience sends forth and lets flow  
 Where is the one who had pity for you in war 10  
 When the steel was thought hateful and rang?  
 Where is one you left behind at dawn when you  
 Met the Rum and skulls were split by swords?  
 The fates allotted to you two persons unfairly  
 But they made your share just in the end  
 And when you measure what they took with what  
 They left, it rejoices your heart and consoles  
 It is certain that your happiness is richer and  
 It is clear that your fortune is higher  
 By my life! you have kept the fates busy 15  
 With the enemy, so why should they seek work?  
 How many you have revived with swords from time  
 As prisoners, and from poverty with gifts?  
 It counts this help against itself when  
 It attacks secretly thinking to take revenge  
 Its thoughts deceive for you afflict it  
 And you remain in peace not put to the test  
 Indeed the enemy may attack you as they will  
 They will not harm the shadow of your person  
 And you were charged with the happiness of some 20  
 Of the souls of the enemy and you got them all  
 The lances struck your lance and then  
 Your lance left spearmen unarmed  
 If you gave any an advantage by surprise  
 Jousting, you give it to horsemen eye to eye  
 And you would reveal that cry of grief in blows  
 As long as it shows anguish and glory  
 The go-between for death leaves her no refusal  
 Even if she is called the bereft one

And when she did not find men good enough 25  
 She of the harem chose death as husband  
 The pleasure of life is precious to the soul  
 And more tempting and sweeter than disgust  
 When an old man says: Alas! It's not that life  
 Bores him, but rather weakness wearies him  
 The instrument of life is health and youth  
 And when they turn from a man, he turns away  
 The world is always taking back gifts it gave  
 O would that its bounty were more stingy  
 Ending the kind of happiness that inherits grief 30  
 And friends that betray love of friends  
 For it is in love with betrayal, and not with  
 Keeping contracts nor completing embraces  
 All tears flow from this and for this  
 And opening a pair of hands empty of this  
 It is feminine nature in her and I do not know  
 Whether man should name her woman or not  
 O king of men who scatters life and death  
 Among them, and glory and humiliation  
 Allah girded you with rule whose sword you are 35  
 A blade which is the place of generosity  
 By that the clients grow rich with lavish gifts  
 By that the enemy are ruined by destruction  
 And when it shakes for bounty it is sea  
 And when it shakes for battle it is an edge  
 And when the earth is dark it is the sun  
 And when the earth is barren it is rain  
 He is the striker of battalions as jousting  
 Grows, and thrusts increase and increase  
 O you victor of the mind which cannot attain to 40  
 Description, you tire my thoughts so go slowly  
 He who gives a comparison for you will weaken it  
 And he who travels your road will go astray  
 For whenever a client wishes immortality for you  
 He says: Live ever or till one sees your like.

232 He spoke commemorating the expedition of Saif al  
 Daula to the border fort of al Hadath when he learned  
 that the Rum had besieged it in Jumadi first in the  
 year 344. (583)

This is eminence so let him aspire who aspires  
 Thus and so, or otherwise he is not so  
 Nobility that strikes the stars with its horns  
 And strength that makes the mountains shake  
 The state of our enemies is tremendous but Saif  
 Al Daula son of swords has greater state  
 Each time they hasten with warnings on the way  
 His horses are faster than they in haste  
 They come to them as despoilers of the earth who 5  
 Bear nothing but steel and heroes

Hidden is their color for the dust has woven  
 Upon them veils and saddle cloths  
 Their breasts and the spears have sworn  
 To plunge into terrors that are before him  
 And to go where the lance cannot find an orbit  
 And where the stallion cannot roam  
 I do not blame softness' son, the king of Rum  
 Even if what he desires is impossible  
 Does the building between his ears shake him

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When the builder sought the sky and got it?  
 Each time he aimed to ring it, the fort too big  
 Covered his forehead and the back  
 He gathered the Rum and the Slavs and Bulgars  
 Against it, and you gathered death  
 You encountered them there with brown lances  
 As the thirsty one comes to the pool  
 They aimed to destroy its wall but built it  
 They came to shorten but made it longer  
 They wanted to drag up engines of war until

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They left them there as it stormed on them  
 Many an affair that befalls you is not praised  
 As action, but one praises the result of it  
 And many a bow rebounded as you were shot at  
 By reversing the shots with arrows from you  
 They took the roads to cut off messengers there  
 But their interception was a message  
 They were a sea that was possessed of waves

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But it became for your sea the mirage  
 They did not run to avoid fighting you but yet  
 The battle that sufficed you was fought  
 And that which cut the necks with blows  
 From your hand, has cut off their hope  
 And the resoluteness which was strong of old  
 Teaches the resolute in this present fear  
 They descend among the dead and recognize them  
 Lamenting maternal and paternal uncles

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The wind bears among them the hair of skulls  
 And scatters among them the limbs  
 They are warned by bodies lest they stay there  
 And they see in all the bones a lesson  
 They see the thrusts reaching the heart  
 Before they see the lances on horseback  
 And when the horsemen begin your thrusting  
 They see the arms extending the spear  
 Fear spreads from the right hand to the right

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And lengthens as from left to left  
 Terror consumes their hands so they do not know  
 Whether they carry swords or manacles  
 And their faces show fear inspired by your face  
 They leave their fineness and beauty to it  
 And the flashing eyes speak of the thought  
 Of the end, and the will to retreat  
 And whenever a coward is left alone in the land  
 He seeks the jousting and attack by himself

They swear not to see you except in heart  
 So long as eyes can deceive men  
 What eye can turn to you and meet you squarely?  
 Many a glance looks at you and turns back  
 The cursed ones do not doubt your taking an army      35  
 But why do they send an army as a gift?  
 What is wrong with one who sets a trap on earth  
 In the hope he can catch the crescent moon?  
 Before what is above the passes and al Udhab  
 And the river there are experienced fighters  
 He forced destiny and the kings for its sake  
 He built it as beauty spot on time's cheek  
 And it walked with the proud steps of a bride  
 And was praised as coquette with the times  
 He defended it with each driving spear point      40  
 From the tyranny of the times and from fear  
 And edges that distinguish forbidden and lawful  
 And they destroy the blood on the legal  
 On the battalions of the courageous blacks  
 That have devoured souls and flocks  
 And indeed the souls of men are beastly  
 They devour each other openly and secretly  
 He who is able to seize anything by conquest  
 And by force does not take it by begging  
 Every youth at time of need has the feeling      45  
 That he is the fiercest of the lions.

233 Saif al Daula recited as an example the words of al Nabigha: There is no fault in them except that their swords \* Have become dull from striking the battalions / They are chosen from the times of Halima's battle \* For the day when is tested all that can be tested. So Abu Tayyib spoke in response to him. (589)

I know you have honored the poets with gifts  
 Both those born recently and those of old  
 And you have given those who remain huge wealth  
 And given those who have gone huge honor  
 I have heard you reciting the verses of Ziyad  
 A recitation as noble as his poem  
 And I do not deny his rank but yet  
 I emulate for that reason his long dead bones.

234 And he spoke in the year 321 at Ra'is al Ain when Saif al Daula attacked Amr ibn Habas of the Banu Asad and Banu Thubba but he did not recite it when he met him but included them with his other eulogies. (589)

Memories of passions and the grazing gazelles  
 Have drawn my death before the time of my death  
 Traces of the camp, longings within me increase  
 In this place just as the increase of blame  
 It is as if every cloud that hovers here  
 Weeps with the eyes of Urwa ibn Hizam  
 Long time I have sucked the drops of its breast  
 Here, and it ruined my speech with blame  
 You were laughing at the departure shamelessly 5  
 And dragging skirts of youth and ill nature  
 That is no howdah on the camels but they  
 Only are life that departs with a farewell  
 Would he who created distance would make pebbles  
 In their hoof pads my knuckles and bones  
 Staring at each other we pour water from eyes  
 Being careful of the guards on the hill  
 Our souls are flowing and we live after them  
 After they have dripped over the feet  
 If like our patience on the day they flowed 10  
 At parting they'd have been no cloudburst  
 They have left me no master except grief  
 And trot of fast camel like a male ostrich  
 Refusal of bounty of her back makes it for me  
 Forbidden as love object except going to you  
 You are the rare one in this time with a family  
 Whose noble acts were born without limit  
 You often gave lavish gifts and did not stop  
 Being distinguished with virtues and graces  
 You make small each great thing and make great 15  
 With: It's as if... and, You have youth's years.  
 You swaggered in garments of praise for indeed  
 Poverty of praise is the extreme of poverty  
 It is bad for you to be seen with sword in battle  
 The scimitar does not create with a scimitar  
 If there was one like you he is dead or divinity  
 And in that case I am free of Islam  
 A king, his days are proud of his position  
 So that they boast about him to other days  
 You think he plundered mankind of their minds 20  
 Due to his mind for they are without reason  
 When you put it to a test his will is revealed  
 As one uniting the twisting and untwisting  
 And when you ask his fingers about his gifts  
 He is not pleased at the world's true verdict  
 Go slowly, O by Allah what has the lance done  
 To Amr Haba and Thubba the sorry?  
 When the spear passed judgment against them  
 It was unjust and they were unjust to justice  
 You left them outside their houses as if 25  
 Their heads were angry with their bodies  
 The stony men were on a land of blood  
 With helmets as stars in a heaven of dust  
 And the armor of every Abu So-and-so by name  
 Changed, and its master became Abu Orphan

My idea of the Emir's battles and his horsemen is  
 In dust they are pursuers of the pursued  
 The blessing of Allah upon you without farewell  
 May he water your father's land with clouds  
 And dress you in clothes of reverence from him  
 And show you your brother's way as great chief  
 For he strikes the lands of the enemy by himself  
 With an army's vanguard like a pounding sea  
 A people in whom death rides horseback  
 And sees in you the patience of virtue in war  
 By Allah! men would not know except for you  
 What bounty is or the striking off of heads.

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235 And he spoke also at the time of his withdrawal from  
 the lands of Rum in the year 345. (594)

Experience comes before the bravery of the brave  
 It is first and that has the second place  
 And when they are united in a manly soul  
 They attain every place in the heights  
 Sometimes the youth jousts with his equal  
 By skill before heroes thrusting at each other  
 Except for intellect the meanest lion would be  
 Nearer to nobility than a man is  
 Nor would souls compete for excellence, nor hands  
 Of the warrior manage the manly lances  
 But for one named for his swords and sharpness  
 When drawn they might be as sheathes  
 He plunged into death with them so it was unknown  
 If it was from scorn or forgetfulness  
 He strove but people of the time and people of  
 All time came short of his goal on high  
 They took seats in the palaces but with him  
 The saddle was the seat for the youth  
 They fancied that battle is a game, but jousting  
 In battle is other than jousting in a field  
 Every foal of a winner that alters by its beauty  
 The heart of its master away from grief  
 When alone they are bound by habits of battle  
 Calling to them makes unnecessary a halter  
 In a huge army whose dust veils the eyes  
 It is as if they looked with their ears  
 The conqueror attacks a distant land with them  
 Every distant place comes close to him  
 It is as if their back legs were in Manbij dust  
 As they drive their front legs at Hisn al Ran  
 Until they cross the Arsanas swimming  
 Scattering there the turbans of the horsemen  
 Galloping as it were against knives of the cold  
 That left the stallions as it were geldings  
 And the water is pure between two dust clouds  
 Dividing itself and meeting itself there

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The Emir galloped in and bubbles were like silver 20  
 And he turned the bridle and it was red gold  
 He twisted ropes from women's braids over it  
 And built boats for it of the crosses  
 He filled it with runners without any legs  
 Barren of belly and black in color  
 They bring what the horsemen have taken prisoner  
 As it were crouching deer, women underneath  
 A river accustomed to protect its people  
 From its fate and blows and misfortunes  
 So you left it and when it protected mankind 25  
 It feared you and excepted the Banu Hamdan  
 Destroying with all of the bright swords  
 Armored treaties for possessors of crowns  
 Seeming poor for all the wealth of their realms  
 Humble in spite of their high rank  
 They take a noon nap in the shade of a fine horse  
 Death to the ostrich and a lasso to the wolf  
 The sword submits to your sword by force  
 And your religion puts down other religions  
 On the mountain passes it was shame to retreat 30  
 And progress was forbidden as impossible  
 And roads were narrow with passage of lances  
 Unbelievers gather against the faithful  
 They looked at the steel staffs as if they  
 Were coming up between shoulders of eagles  
 And at the horsemen whose souls death inspired  
 As if they were no more among the animals  
 You did not stop hitting them reaching the peaks  
 Harshly as if the swords were double there  
 Especially the skulls and faces as if 35  
 Their bodies came to you in safety  
 So they threw away what they shot with and turned  
 Treading on every twanging bow  
 Rain from the clouds covered them with waves  
 Of straight shafts, Indian steel and points  
 Forbidden what they hoped, and attained by them  
 The hope of him who returned disappointed  
 When lances engross the heart of the revenger  
 His heart is busy apart from his brothers  
 Alas the swords hinder the return 40  
 Many are the corpses and few are the captives  
 And the well trained one commands fate for them  
 They submit to him obeying the Merciful  
 Their hair made black the trees of the mountains  
 It was as if there were ravens flying there  
 And the crimson blood flowed over the leaves  
 So it seemed oranges were on the branches  
 Swords are with those whose hearts are like  
 The hearts of steeds when they meet the ranks  
 You find a sword for all the daring of its edge 45  
 Is like a coward in the hands of a coward  
 The Arabs have raised in you a pillar and it is  
 For heads of kings a torch to light fires

The geneology of their boasting is traced to you  
 The lineage of their ancestors to Adnan  
 O one who destroys whom he wishes with his sword  
 I am one of the corpses made by your goodness  
 And when I see you my vision is perplexed by you  
 When I praise you my tongue is dazed by you.

236 And he spoke also praising him and commemorating the  
 deception of the Patricius in his oath by the head  
 of the king when he met Saif al Daula in the pass in  
 the year 345. (599)

Outcome of an oath in outcome of battle is ruth  
 Can such a vow increase your courage?  
 And such an oath since you have promised it  
 That shows you, as to reliability, are rotten?  
 Ibn Shamushqiq vowed to the youth and broke faith  
 With him, in a handclasp forgetting his word  
 An agent is one who wants to do without an oath  
 He is swift in the acting and generous  
 All swords when the striking continues long  
 Weaken, except Saif al Daula the impetuous  
 If a horse grows weary so it cannot carry him  
 His spirit would carry him to his enemy  
 Where are patricians and the vows they swore  
 By hair of the king and the lies they lied?  
 He avoided the lies in their words with his swords  
 They are tongues and chiefs are their mouths  
 Eloquent informers to their skulls about him  
 What they do not know and what they do  
 He brings back horses shoeless having been led  
 From places like Wabar and its people Iram  
 Like Tell Batriq whose inhabitants were tricked  
 Because your home was Ras Qansarin and Ajam  
 They thought you were a torch in Aleppo and if  
 You went forth without it darkness returned  
 They think of the sun except they are ignorant  
 They leave death but they are imagining  
 Scarcely has Saruj finished opening its eyes  
 When your army presses between their eyelids  
 And the dust seizes upon Harran and their Baqa  
 The sun grows pale at times and veils itself  
 Clouds come to Hisn al Ran tenaciously  
 No stinginess in them unless of revenge  
 An army, as if you are in a land conquering it  
 But earth has no front nor the army  
 When landmarks disappear from that, flags appear  
 When flags go from this, landmarks reappear  
 The horses find the hot star heats their halters  
 And brands the bridge of the nose  
 Until they come to drink at Sumnin's pools  
 Bits in their mouths sizzle in water

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And so they burst on Hinzit town with fury  
 Grazing edges on fertile hair growth  
 And they leave not a mole there that has sight  
 Under the dust, nor a hawk that has feet  
 Nor any lion with a mane for armor  
 Nor any wild cow with handmaidens like her  
 The caves of the earth and the valleys and hills  
 Cast them on the edges of their scimitars  
 They crossed the Arsanas that was defensive      25  
 How defend those who defend not themselves?  
 Nor did the stream's current bar you from them  
 Nor high peaks turn you back from them  
 You struck it with breasts of horses carrying  
 Men, when they met you head-on they yielded  
 Waves dashed against the chests of their horses  
 Like a herd rushes on in a fury  
 You crossed it going ahead of them to the land  
 Its dwellers bones and its homes in flames  
 In their hands flames which were worshipped      30  
 Before the Magi, kept burning for this day  
 Indian irons, if you diminish the band, small  
 In their edge, and if you enlarge great  
 You shared Tell Batrik with them and theirs were  
 Its men, and yours children and women  
 The boats cross with the foam of waves on them  
 On their upper lips the slaver from its spray  
 Black, horsemen riding in their bellies  
 Toilsome, but pain is with people not them  
 They are horses which you trick the enemy with      35  
 Not having their nature nor character  
 Product of your thought in the moment of haste  
 Like a word's letters hearer's wit grasps  
 They long for the morning at Darba in the uproar  
 To see you, but will not see you being blind  
 You push them back with an army and you its blaze  
 And its spears are the forelock on its face  
 And the firmest thing for them was their bodies  
 Falling about you, but the souls fled away  
 And the Awji horses fill the roads behind them      40  
 And Mashrafi swords fill day above them  
 And when the blows agree on the forward motion  
 The heads come to clash in the air  
 Son of Shamushqiq betrayed his oath and did not  
 Return, but stayed afar while it was mocked  
 Nor did the distant one have hope for his heart  
 What was near robbed and plundered the soul  
 Long armor repels the spears of knights from him  
 A rain of lances on the folds is continuous  
 The spears write on it but do not pierce it      45  
 As if every point on it were a pen  
 May shower not water the trees that hide him  
 Taken from him, vultures will veil his shape  
 He plays with his lords without honor you aim at,  
 Wine drinking and lute playing and singing,

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Having girded on the sword over thanks of Allah  
 No favor can exceed in sharpness these two  
 The blood of the Rum is cast on you in submission  
 If you call without a blow, blood will reply  
 Battle outdistances every misfortune for them 50  
 Neither death nor old age can overwhelm them  
 It banishes the sleep of Ali from his eyes  
 Soul reveals soul in other ways than dreams  
 Enduring king, guided one, witness to his  
 Uprightness and guidance in Arabs and non-Arabs  
 The son of the dust cloud in Nejd for its knights  
 By his sword Kufa and Mecca were his  
 Do not seek generosity after his appearance  
 A noble act in their gift is a sealed hand  
 Do not bother with poems after this poet of his  
 Speech is corrupt when the deaf praise. 55

237 And he spoke also and it is said that he intended him by it. (606)

I leave you and if there was anything with you  
 Of evil before parting, afterwards it is a gift  
 When I remember what was between me and you  
 I comfort my heart for the pain that I find.

238 And he spoke mourning the death of the elder sister of Saif al Daula and comforting him for her. She died at Mayyafariqun. (607)

O sister brother's best O daughter father's best  
 You have in them a name of most noble lineage  
 Your rank is too glorious to name it in an elegy  
 He who describes you names you among Arabs  
 Sad feelings do not yet possess his tongue nor  
 Tears, but they are in the grip of feelings  
 You betrayed O death as many as you destroyed in  
 One you hit; as many criers as you quieted  
 How many of her brothers you escorted in attacks  
 How many you asked not stingy or balky! 5  
 He crossed the Jezireh until the news came to me  
 I was frightened at it hoping it was false  
 Until his trust did not leave me hope  
 I choked with a tear as he nearly choked me  
 Their tongues stumbled with it in his mouth  
 Couriers on the road and pens in the letters  
 As if for Falata the parade had never been full  
 At Dyar Bekr, nor honors given nor gifts made  
 Nor ever gave back life after transferal  
 Nor asked for help with alas! or pity! 10

I know Iraq has long nights since the death news  
 But how are nights for the hero at Aleppo?  
 He suspects my heart is not consumed by flames  
 And the tears of my eyes are not flowing  
 No! by the respectability that was well kept  
 By holiness of glory, purpose and culture  
 One who went left none to inherit her character  
 Even if her hand left inheritance of wealth  
 Her care was for height and glory from her youth  
 But her friends' care was in play and games  
 They knew when she greeted, beauty in her smile  
 But for Allah, none knew her cool teeth  
 Her hair was happiness to grains of musk  
 But grief to hearts of helmet and cap  
 When it looks beyond her at head wearing helmet  
 It sees the veil on top of it at the peak  
 If she was created feminine yet she was created  
 Noble, not feminine in mind or wit  
 And if she was of Taglib with many ancestors  
 Yet in wine is truth not found in grapes  
 Would that the suns that appear were absent  
 And the absent sun were not absent  
 Would that the eye day brings back with it was  
 Ransom for that gone not to return  
 None who wear ruby necklaces are her like  
 And none who gird on the Indian scimitar  
 I cannot think of the beauty of her good deeds  
 Unweeping; there is no love without cause  
 She had before her face every kind of veil but  
 You were not content O earth with these veils  
 You have not seen the eye of man reach her  
 Did you envy the stars' eyes for her?  
 And did you hear my greeting come to her?  
 I was afar and did not greet her near by  
 How should news reach our dead one buried  
 If it fell short of our living absent?  
 O patient best, visit the best of hearts in her  
 Say to its owner: O most useful of clouds,  
 And most noble of men not second to any  
 In generosity except your excellent fathers  
 Their times shared with you these two souls  
 Their pearls live, one ransomed, one gone on  
 One gone returned in search of one left behind  
 For we forget, but the days are searching  
 Only the shortest of times was between them  
 The time between approach and watering  
 Your Lord reward you with pardon for your grief  
 For grief of all who grieve is akin to anger  
 You are a people whose souls are generous  
 In what they give and do not give as plunder  
 You have settled among all the kings of men  
 In place of brown lance among other weapons  
 May the nights not endow you for their hands  
 When they strike, break hard wood with soft

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May they not aid the enemy you have conquered  
 For they hunt the falcon with the buzzard  
 If they rejoice with a love they also afflict  
 Wonderful that they bring both states!  
 And often a man reckons he has attained his goal      40  
 And it surprises with a thing not reckoned  
 And no one obtains from them his needs  
 Nor is a goal attained without another goal  
 Men disagree until there is no agreement for them  
 Except in ruin and there is discord in ruin  
 It is said the soul of man is saved by peace  
 It is said it shares with man's body in loss  
 He who reflects on the world and its dear hearts  
 Thought holds him between languor and toil.

239 And he spoke also praising him after he had sent to  
him gifts time after time when he was in Iraq in  
Shawwal in the year 351. (631)

What is wrong O messenger if all of us are sick?  
 I am in love and your heart is anxious  
 Each time the one I sent there returns  
 He envies me and is false in what he said  
 Her eyes have corrupted the faith between us  
 And the minds are betrayed by their hearts  
 You suffer what I suffered of the pain of love  
 For her, and love is where emaciation is  
 And when love mingles with a passionate heart      5  
 Then that is a hint to every eye  
 Our provision from your face's beauty lasts  
 But beauty of face is a changing thing  
 Embrace us, we embrace you in this world  
 For permanent things are few in it  
 One knows from looking that dwellers long  
 Like the loaded camels are longing  
 If you see me grow darker after the whiteness  
 It is praise for the flexible lance  
 A maid has been with me in the waste land      10  
 Change is custom of colors with her  
 The bride's tent veils you from her but yet  
 From her for you there is a kiss of crimson  
 Like her you change my color and make me ill  
 And beauty increases your brilliance  
 We knew but yet we have asked about Nejd:  
 Is our road long or is it far away?  
 And many were the longing questions  
 And many were the consoling replies  
 We did not stay in one place however good      15  
 Nor was any motion possible for a place  
 Each time a meadow spread wide for us we said:  
 We go to Aleppo and you are the road

In you is pasture for our horses and camels  
 And toward that our trotting and galloping  
 And many there are who are called Emir  
 But the Emir who is there is hope  
 He whom I parted from east and west  
 But his gifts were before me without end  
 And then censure of bounty comes to listen 20  
 Censor and censured are ransom for him  
 Favor gives life to many a servant by his  
 Hand, when others are struck dead by it  
 The winning horses and the long lances  
 Long coats of mail and polished swords  
 And every time it dawned in the enemy's camp  
 He said: It is a downpour and a torrent.  
 They take it by surprise tearing off the woven  
 Chain mail, like feathers are plucked 25  
 His horsemen chase horsemen like beasts hunted  
 And a small band takes prisoner an army  
 And when war appears fear asserts  
 By his eyes that he is terrible  
 And when he is well then the times are healthy  
 And when he is sick the times are ailing  
 And when his face is absent from a place  
 There is by his fame a fine show  
 There is none beside you O Ali as a hero 30  
 Whose sword unsheathes before his honor  
 How could Iraq and Egypt not be safe  
 If your raids and horsemen are before them?  
 If you turned away from the path of the enemy  
 Lote tree and palm would tie up their horses.  
 And know, by one whose pride is rejected by him,  
 In themselves the meanness and lowness  
 You all your life long have battled the Rum  
 When is the promise of a return fulfilled?  
 Aside from the Rum behind your back are Rum  
 And to which of the two sides can you turn? 35  
 All their men sit on the sidelines of your run  
 And their swords and spears stand beside them  
 None of those with him pass around death  
 As they pass around cool wine for him  
 I no longer enjoy what was your generosity  
 And my times, as I see you, are miserly  
 Distance from you embitters but bounty is near  
 The pasture rich and my body emaciated  
 If I found a house not in my world  
 And gifts came to me you would be giver 40  
 One of my slaves if you live is a thousand Kafurs  
 Your bounty all of Nile and Upper Egypt  
 If mishap avoids you then I do not worry  
 About any whom discord and danger doom.

answered by this qasida in Shawwal in the year 353.  
(618)

I understood a letter that does good to letters  
 Homage is due the command of the Arabs' Emir  
 Submissive to him and made merry by him  
 Even if the act comes short of what is duty  
 Nothing hinders me except fear of the slanderer  
 For the ways of slanderers are falsehood  
 Exaggerations of people and their belittling  
 And their trotting between us and ambling  
 And indeed his ears were aiding them 5  
 But his heart and mind were aiding me  
 But I did not tell the moon: You are silver.  
 Nor did I tell the sun: You are gold.  
 But the distance of a friend was shaken by it  
 And slowness to anger was enraged by it  
 And no country has held me after you  
 Nor substituted a lord for my favor's lord  
 He who rides the ox after the horse  
 Denies the cloven hoof and the dew lap  
 Nor have I matched any kings of the land, 10  
 Not to mention some, with the one in Aleppo  
 And if I were to name them by his name  
 He would be steel and they wood  
 Is his comparison to mind or generosity  
 Or to bravery or to culture?  
 The name is blessed, the surname is brilliant  
 Generous the soul, noble the ancestry  
 Brother of war, he is served by ones he captures  
 As his slaves, and he bestows what he plunders  
 And when he gathers wealth, he gathers it 15  
 As a youth who is unhappy unless he gives it  
 Indeed I follow him with memories of him  
 Blessings of Allah and showers of clouds  
 My praises on him for his benefits  
 And I am near to him whether far or near  
 And if his showers have departed from me  
 Yet most of their pools have water yet  
 O sword of your Lord and not of his creatures  
 O owner of nobility not a sword ridge  
 Most spirited of those possessed of spirit 20  
 Wisest of those possessed of rank in rank  
 The best joustier of those who grip the Khatti  
 Strongest of those who strike with sword  
 With these words I call you O border people  
 So be present with skulls under the blade  
 For they despaired of the pleasure of life  
 The eyes are perplexed and the heart flutters  
 Words of the enemy confused the Domesticus:  
 Truly Ali is seriously ailing.  
 But his horsemen know that he indeed  
 If he wishes will ride even if sick

He brings them from the breadth of his lands  
 With their long manes and short tail bones  
 The peaks are hid by his armies  
 And they appear small if they are not hid  
 The wind cannot pass through the space  
 Without being scratched by a spear or stopped  
 And they drown their cities with the armies  
 And you find their voices faint in the uproar  
 And are they ugly in seeking their battle!  
 And are they ugly in leaving what they seek!  
 You were afar and fought them in a battle  
 You came and fought them in their flight  
 They found in him an honor when he came  
 You were the excuse for it when he fled  
 You outdistanced them with their death  
 The advantage of rescue comes before ruin  
 They boasted to their Creator being prostrate  
 And if not rescued they bowed to the cross  
 How many you protected from death with death  
 And snatched from agony with agony  
 And they thought that he if he returned  
 Would bring with him the crowned king  
 They both asked help from him whom they served  
 And according to them he had been crucified  
 They push away from themselves what he obtained  
 O men what a wonder is this!  
 I see the Muslims along with the polytheists  
 Now in weakness and now in terror  
 And you with Allah are on the mountain side  
 With little sleep and much of toil  
 And you by yourself served the unity in Him  
 And the world submitted to father and son  
 Would that your swords to the jealous ones  
 Would bring grief when you appear to them  
 And would that your pains were on his body  
 And would that you repaid with hate and love  
 For if you repaid what I would receive from you  
 Weakest joy will be strongest reason.

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## MISRIYYAT

241 And Abu Tayyib spoke praising Kafur al Ikshid in the latter part of Jumada in the year 346. (623)

Enough illness for you to see death a cure  
And enough deaths that they are desired  
You wanted that when you wanted to see  
A friend weak or an enemy concealed  
If you are content to live with baseness  
Then don't get ready a Yemeni sword  
And do not extend the long lance for war  
And don't make friends with a fine horse  
Modesty is no use to lions that are hungry  
They are not feared except famished 5  
I loved you my heart before you loved one afar  
But he was a betrayer so you be faithful  
I know parting makes you complain after him  
But you are not my heart if I see you fret  
Tears of the eye are betrayers to their lord  
If the channels are the tracks of deceivers  
If bounty does not make provision free of evil  
Praise is not earned nor does wealth stay  
There is nature in the soul that shows the man 10  
Was it bounty came or pretended bounty?  
Diminish the longing, O heart, for often  
I see you loving one who does not respond  
I was created sociable, if I return to youth  
I leave my gray hair with hurt heart weeping  
But in Fustat there is a sea that I will visit  
With my life, my counsel, my love and rhymes  
And horses between whose ears we leveled spears  
They spent night easily following lance heads 15  
Running on feet each time they touched stones  
They printed unshod the falcon's breast  
They look with trusty dark eyes into the gloom  
Seeing distant shapes as they are  
They prick up the ears to the faint whispers  
Thinking of secret talk they are called by  
They pull the dawn riders by the reins  
As if on their necks they were snakes  
Firmly a body in the saddle moves as if riding  
Beside, and heart in body moves apace  
Seeking Kafur and leaving all others 20  
He who seeks a sea thinks little of creeks  
Bringing us to a man, eye's apple of the times  
Leaving the white behind and the corners

We cross over from them as patrons to one whom  
 We know from his gifts and favors to them  
 A young man, we came on backs of our ancestors  
 To his times, only in hopes of a meeting  
 His rank rises above the aid of nobility  
 So he performs no acts but virgin ones  
 He erases hate in competitors by his mildness  
 If they don't perish in it he kills enemies  
 Father of Musk, this is the face I longed for  
 This is the moment I was hoping for  
 I faced deserts and high mountains before him  
 And passed at noonday leaving water thirsty  
 Father of all scent not Father of Musk alone  
 And of all clouds--not merely morning clouds  
 Everyone who is honored is shown by some trait  
 But the Merciful united in you all traits  
 Though a man acquires eminence by bounty  
 You give high rank with your generosity  
 It is not much that a man visits you on foot  
 And returns as viceroy of the two Iraqs  
 Indeed you give an army which has come raiding  
 To one of your clients who has come begging  
 You scorn the world with scorn of experience  
 That sees all but yourself dying in it  
 You are not one who reached kingship by wishing  
 But rather by days that whitened the forelock  
 Your enemies see them as turmoils in the land  
 But you see them as stairways to the sky  
 For them you have worn the turbid dust as if  
 You saw unclearly to see the air clear  
 You led to them all short haired swimmers  
 Bringing you angry, returning you content  
 Drawn out, sharp ones submit to you at command  
 Transgress if you make exception or oppose  
 Twenty cubit brown ones you approve at watering  
 Approve your aiming at horsemen they drink  
 Detachments that do not cease to trample tribes  
 Of the earth having trampled desert for them  
 With them you raided kings' camps so their hoofs  
 Managed their skulls and their valleys  
 You are one who covers the spear points first  
 And refuses to cover the spear points second  
 Wram Indian equalizes a pair of dreadful swords  
 Your sword in a hand makes an end of equality  
 Words of Sem to his offspring if he saw you;  
 Sons' soul and wealth ransoms brother's son.  
 His Lord brought the protector to the far limit  
 His soul not content except with the goal  
 Once called and he answered, to glory and rank  
 While other men rejected the soul's call  
 He has come to be above the world that sees him  
 If far even if nobility makes him come close.

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242 And he came to him after he recited this qasida and the black smiled on him and arose and he was wearing sandals and Abu Tayyib saw the cracks in his feet so he spoke mocking him. (629)

I'd show you content if the soul could be secret  
 But I am not content with myself nor with you  
 Are lying, perjury, betrayal and sordidness  
 Due? Are you close to me as person or shame?  
 You think my smiles are in hope and emulation  
 But I am only making fun of these hopes  
 I am amazed at your legs in sandals since I  
 Saw you with sandals when you were barefoot  
 And you didn't know whether your color was black      5  
 Due to stupidity, or if it was pure white  
 The cut of your ankles in the split reminds me  
 And you walk in oily clothes yet naked  
 Except for men's favor I would praise you  
 By what I have mocked you with in secret  
 And you would be happy with what I recited  
 Even if the recitation was wild satire  
 And if you had nothing good for your ransom  
 I'd ransom with my sight of delightful lips  
 The likes of you are brought from distant lands      10  
 To make the women in mourning clothes laugh.

243 And Kafur built a palace at the Iza grand mosque on the lake and moved in and asked Abu Tayyib to commemorate it. (631)

But congratulation is what belongs to an equal  
 And to those who approach from afar  
 And I for you am not a limb that rejoices  
 With the rejoicing of other limbs  
 I think that palaces are small for you even if  
 The bricks of this building were stars  
 And even if that which murmurs in its waters  
 Were made of the brightest silver  
 You have the highest rank you could wish for      5  
 Whether the place is in earth or heaven  
 And yours are the men and the land and  
 What pastures between green and dusty  
 And yours groves of fine horses and what  
 They bear in the way of long brown lances  
 Truly the noble Father Musk can boast  
 Of what he has built in the heights  
 And of the battles which ended for him  
 When he had no palace but the battlefield  
 And of what his bright swords imprint      10  
 Upon the skulls of the enemy  
 And of musk that he is named for that is not  
 Musk, but rather the perfume of praise

Not by the city built in the country  
Nor what attracts the hearts of women  
A house is dwelt in when you live in it by  
    Something finer than it: light and rank  
He loosed in the flowers their perfumes  
    The growths of nobility and grace  
He shamed the sun each time a sun appeared  
    With a sun of shining blackness  
It is in your clothes that glory dwells  
    With a brightness easy for every beam  
Only courage wears it and brilliance of soul  
    It is the best of brilliant cloaks  
Noble you are in bravery and sagacity  
    Of visage and power in faithfulness  
Who would not exchange the white king's color  
    For color of the protector and his face?  
The sons of war see them with the eyes  
    That see him with them on battle's morning  
O hope of the eyes in all of the earth  
    There is no one else that I see as my hope  
Indeed the desert exhausted my horse before  
    We trysted with food and water for me  
Cast on me whatever you wish for me for I  
    Am lion-hearted with bloody face  
My heart belongs to kings even though  
    My tongue seems to be a poet's.

244 He spoke praising Kafur the Ikshid in Shawwal 346  
with this pearl which is one of his finest poems.  
(633)

Who are the wild heifers in the dress of bedouins  
Red the ornaments and camels and clothing?  
If you ask by way of complaint at their goodness  
Who harms you with wakefulness and punishment?  
May the cows not repay me with languor afterward  
They repaid my tears that flowed with flowing  
Travelers, perhaps their howdahs as they go  
Will be protected among jousting and striking  
Perhaps hoofs of the camels will tread with them  
On the blood spilled by the horsemen  
Many visits I made you slyly among fearful Arabs  
And they slept through the visit of a wolf  
I visited them and the black of night interceded  
I turned away as the white dawn incited me  
They met the wild animals grazing where they live  
They differ in taking down and putting up tents  
Their neighbors and the worst of neighbors to them  
And their masters and the worst of masters  
The heart of every beloved is in their tents  
The flocks of all who take flocks by plunder

Faces of town women thought beautiful are not  
 Like the faces of the plump bedouins  
 The beauty of the town woman is contrived by deceit  
 Among bedouin beauty is not artificial  
 Where are the equals of the goats of Iram?  
 There are no equals for beauty and goodness  
 I ransom the deer of the desert who do not know  
 How to chew their words nor dye their veils  
 Nor do they come out of the bath bent over  
 Their thighs have smooth tendons 15  
 Of my loves none try to gild silver over and  
 I leave the color of my gray hair without dye  
 And among the loving friends in word and habit  
 I do not like the hair on the face that lies  
 Would that fate would give me that which it took  
 From me of the mind and experience it gave  
 For youth is not excluded from experience  
 Indeed intelligence is found in young and old  
 The royal protector grew up in a mature way 20  
 Before maturity, cultured before educated  
 Experienced in wisdom without the experience  
 Cultured in nobility before being cultured  
 Until he attained the limits of the world  
 And his desire for beginnings and youth  
 He controlled the kingdom of Egypt up to Aden  
 To Iraq and Rum land and Nubia  
 When unpredictable winds come from other lands  
 They do not blow here except regularly  
 And the sun does not cross when it rises 25  
 Except it has permission from him to set  
 The clay of his seal dispatches business there  
 Even if all writing were erased by him  
 The bearing of it brings down all of the lances  
 From saddles of all powerful fast steeds  
 As if every request in his ears  
 Were the coat of Joseph to the eyes of Jacob  
 When his enemies press him with a request  
 They press with an unconquerable army  
 If they make war they do not escape by advancing  
 Nor by fleeing from what he intends 30  
 His bravery readies the weakest of his squadrons  
 For death, so that death is not to be feared  
 They said: You fled to him for help. I said:  
 To showers of his hands and cloud bursts  
 To the one whose fingers give governments  
 Nothing is desired in the wake of his gifts  
 Nor does he frighten anyone with betrayal  
 Nor does he scare with violent affliction  
 No, he frightens the army which he strikes down  
 It is like him in the dark and black dust  
 I found the most useful wealth that I have stored 35  
 The fast horse's winning gait and gallop  
 When they see changes of the times betraying me  
 They and the spear point are true to me

They have passed deserts until their voices say  
 What sort of big, lean ones have we here?  
 They love the men of action whose ideals are not  
 In putting on clothes and food and drink  
 He aims at stars with eyes that want them 40  
 As if they were plunder to eyes of plunderers  
 And so I came to the one who was veiled  
 In order to meet souls of virtue unveiled  
 In a strong body with pure mind that laughed at  
 The nature of men as a ridiculous marvel  
 Praise is his first and praise after that to them  
 And to lances late at night and in the day  
 And how shall I deny O Kafur your favors?  
 They are told you by me O all of my goals  
 O king of the wealth by which you are named 45  
 In the east and the west by fame and by name  
 You are the darling but yet I take refuge  
 Lest I be a lover without a beloved.

245 He spoke praising Kafur in Dhu'l Hijja in the year  
 346. (640)

I want from the days that which they do not want  
 I wail of our parting but they are its army  
 They estrange love and unite it but how can they  
 Unite its union and its blocking in love?  
 The world's nature is contrary to love's lasting  
 So how can I ask it to bring back a lover?  
 The swiftest thing you can do to bring on change  
 Is undertake what is contrary to your nature  
 May Allah keep camels parted from us on whom are 5  
 Wild cows whose cheeks eye's second rain feel  
 At the wadi for him something in the heart, as if  
 When they went a neck lost its necklace  
 When the howdahs moved over the greenery  
 Myrtle and musk of the beauties mingled  
 Many a change like one of these I aimed to master  
 Less than them perils of road and its distance  
 I tire of Allah's world as one whose care grows  
 Soul's power falls short of what it wishes  
 So do not spend all of your wealth for glory 10  
 For glory whose knot is in wealth is lost so  
 And it works the way the hand of glory does  
 As it attacks an enemy, and wealth is its arm  
 No glory in the world for one of little wealth  
 No worldly wealth for one of small glory  
 And among men one content with the low in life  
 His vehicle his legs and his coat his skin  
 Yet a heart is in my breast that has no goal  
 Whose limits end for me in my intentions  
 It sees its body dressed lightly to please 15  
 But it prefers to wear armor that is heavy

It charges me with noon journeys in every desert  
 Barley its fodder and its ostrich my food  
 The sharpest weapons that a man girds on himself:  
 Hope of generous Abu Musk and journey to him  
 They aid him when all other aid betrays and are  
 Family for one with ancestors of few offspring  
 I am today of his family due to the two slaves  
 We have a father in him whose sons ransom him  
 From his wealth, wealth of great ones and himself 20  
 From his flocks a cradle and milk for a child  
 We hold the Khatti lances around his tent  
 Stallions and lean ones of a squadron trot by  
 We experience the arrows in every downpour  
 Whose thunder echoes the bows of the cavalry  
 If Egypt is not a haunt of lions or their lair  
 Yet those men who are there are lions  
 The silver of Kafur and his gold is that which is  
 On tips of his lances, not his cash in hand  
 The enemy and others about him have tested them 25  
 Sport of the chase and its earnest proves it  
 Abu Musk's pardon is not destroyed by your sin  
 Rather his rage is destroyed by your excuse  
 O he is conqueror by the sincerity of his efforts  
 O he is conqueror in his efforts at sincerity  
 My youth turned from me but you replace its sweet  
 Its loss does not bother me when I see you  
 Indeed adults in these times grow young with you  
 And youths grow gray with others than you  
 O would the day's heat of the journey was known 30  
 Known night's coolness and you asked of it  
 Would you could have watched me at Lake Hiran  
 You'd known I have the edge of your sword  
 For I when I begin a matter that I have planned  
 Its distance is near and its hardness easy  
 People of the age continue to compare me to you  
 As you shine by me the uniqueness shows  
 One said when I saw the army and its lord:  
 Before you a king whose slave an army's lord!  
 I meet a smiling mouth and I know that he 35  
 Is near whose promise is in a gracious hand  
 One who loves you visited you on my behalf  
 His disdain was for men except for you alone  
 Left behind is he who makes not your house an end  
 He comes and knows this is where his power is  
 And if I receive what I hope from you perhaps  
 I drink water whose drinking tires birds  
 Your promise is action before the promise since  
 Its promise equals action true to speech  
 Approve of my work like one who proves a horse 40  
 The gallop and his fast paces will show you  
 If you are in doubt about a sword, you test it  
 And you either reject or reckon on it  
 For the Indian sword is like the others  
 If belt and scabbard do not part with it

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Truly you are to be thanked in every respect  
Even if the support is only your affability  
Each gift exists or it is there in essence  
A glance of your eye equals it for me  
I am in a sea of goodness whose source is  
Your gifts whose tide I hope for and its flow  
But it is not my desire to profit from gold  
But rather to try something new in honor  
He is generous whose bounty disgraces generosity  
He praises him whose praise disgraces praise  
As for you when the unlucky star comes near  
You approach it but your face makes it lucky.

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246 And the black sent one to Abu Tayyib secretly who said to him: You lengthen your stay at the court. He meant that he knew what was in his thoughts. (648)

Staying willingly is a small thing to him  
And spending generously of one's thoughts  
Since they betrayed you on smiling days  
What should they do now on the dark days?

247 Fifty slaves of the black died in the new palace to which he had removed in good times and he took fright and went out of it to another palace so Abu Tayyib spoke. (648)

The best of houses that claim a blessing  
Is a house that has the blessing of its king  
Finest house that pours favor on its dwellers  
Is a house where men want to favor the family  
This second dwelling of yours we congratulate  
For he who passes by the first forgets it  
When you settle in a place after making friends  
You do it proud over what you had before  
Reason has not deserted the house where you were  
For your perfume is a soul for its quarters  
He who gave you the first one completed your joy  
He will not take back your life that he gave.

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248 He spoke also praising him when he had given him a black foal in the month of Rabia in the year 347. (649)

Parting and one I parted from was not to blame  
Journey and one I went to was best of goals  
But it is not a good home for me where house  
Has no respect and no generosity in it

It is nature to a soul not to cease from fears  
 Of evil as all mountain roads are tried  
 I saddled up and many a weeper with fawns' eyes  
     For me, and many a tear in the lions' eyes  
 A mistress of fine earrings in this place is not  
     Anxious for the master of the sharp sword  
 If my trouble were due a lover who wears a veil  
     I'd excuse it but it's a lover with a turban  
 He shot warding my shot and what else one wards  
     In love, breaking my hand and bow and arrows  
 When a man's act is wrong his thoughts are wrong  
     What he is used to is true to what he fancies  
 He attacks his love with hostile words  
     And in the night the doubts of evil appear  
 I make friends with a man's soul before his body  
     And I know it from his actions and his speech  
 I am forgiving to my friend and I know that he  
     If I give him clemency for ignorance repents  
 If a man is lavish in his bounty to me frowning  
     I repay him leaving gifts with a smile  
 I love young men who are all noble chiefs  
     Of the finest like straight lance shafts  
 White camel under him crosses a desert, guarding  
     Him, horsemen of a huge attacking army  
 There is no continence in his sword or his spear  
     Rather it is in his hand, genitals and mouth  
 Not everyone is a lover of beautiful actions  
     And not all of his actions are perfect  
 Generosity is a ransom for Abu Musk for that  
     Is the leader of horses guided by the black  
 Bright in glory they look up behind him  
     To the ample nature and the perfect face  
 When authority defends itself from you  
     Stand still in front of it to learn from it  
 Excuse is difficult for one who sees him, so he  
     Seems weak in endeavor or small in generosity  
 Who is like Kafur when the horsemen attack?  
     It is little for one to say to them: Advance!  
 Very sturdy are the stallions and dust comes  
     Down throats of horsemen who have veils  
 Abu Musk I hope from you help against the enemy  
     I hope for strength to dye a sword with blood  
 And today to enrage the envious and immediately  
     To fix pain upon them in place of favor  
 I hope only in certain people for whoever  
     Wants rains without clouds is benighted  
 If you were not in Egypt I would not have come  
     With heart enslaved by a passion of love  
 Nor would bedouin dogs have barked at my horse  
     As in a night attack of the Dailami  
 Eye of a pursuer could not follow our tracks  
     Nor see any but horse's tracks above camel track  
 We printed desert with them till they took a sip  
     Of Nile and settled in shade of Muqattam's dust

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Haughty, it violates my competence with its hint  
I exceeded my mark and blame by coming to him 30  
He poured perfume on me that was untroubled  
And I poured thanks on him that stammered  
I chose you from kings and chose for them in us  
A story, for I judged your mind and judge  
Finest face among men is the face of a patron  
The trustiest hand among them is gracious hand  
Most noble is he who is most noble in spirit  
Furthest advanced over all those magnified 35  
Some seek the world when they do not want it as  
Joy of a beloved, or evil of a criminal  
The foal has arrived which has on its withers  
Your brand which is on every neck and wrist  
Yours the creatures, riders on horseback all  
Even if on sun and moon out of this world  
If I knew how long my life was to be I'd share it  
I'd have a third wait for you, now you know!  
But yet what has passed of life is past 40  
So endow me with swift joy that is plunder  
I am happy you want to be a lover of mine  
I lead a soul to you as the surrendered is led  
Such as you are in the middle of one's heart  
So say it for me and I need not speak.

249 And he went out and spoke satirizing him. (654)

More fool than a slave and than his wife  
Is he who makes a slave judge over himself  
He who sees that you have his promise  
Is not like him who sees you in his prison  
However he will show his judgment  
By the corrupt judgment of his taste  
A slave has a nature that doesn't go beyond  
His stinking genitals or his grinders  
He does not perform a vow on its day  
Nor recall what he said in the evening  
He only deceives in his pulling  
As if you were a boatman on his rope  
Do not hope for success in business matters  
The slaver's hand passed over his head  
And if complaint disgraces you in him  
And his condition, look at his source  
Rarely does one blame his outside  
Without blaming his planting  
He who can find an escape from his power  
Will not find an escape from his root.

250 Some people among the slaves of Ibn Ikshid, the lord of Kafur, tried to create discord between them and

there was disquietude for some days. Then they came back to him and peace was established and Abu Tayyib spoke. (656)

Peace was cut off as the enemy wanted  
 And the tongues of the envious published it  
 Some desired your conduct of affairs to change  
 From what they had to what they intended  
 What the betrayers plotted was altered  
 From blame into an increase in love  
 The word of the slanderer had no power  
 Over the lover but on the contrary  
 Speech only succeeds in a man

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When it concurs with love in the heart  
 By my life if you were shaken by what was said  
 Yet you met it more firmly than a mountain  
 And men counseled what you rejected  
 You were more guided than they to guidance  
 The counselor was hit because he did not strive  
 He failed to make a hit after the struggle  
 You got what is not obtained by sword or lance  
 And you kept their souls in their bodies  
 The Khatti lances were in their racks about you

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And the polished ones in their scabbards  
 They did not know when they saw your heart quiet  
 To them that its counsels were in pursuit  
 He ransoms your mind who is not ransomed  
 Every opinion taught wishes to ransom it  
 And when intelligence is not in a nature  
 Growth cannot make it mature in birth  
 And by this and the like of it you ruled 0

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Kafur, and you led all the intractable  
 And those who submitted to you submitted  
 But submission is not the lion's nature  
 Truly you are the parent and a whipping father  
 Longs for reconciliation with his child  
 May evil not pass by him who seeks evil for you  
 May discord single out people of discord  
 And you, as long as you live, are body and soul

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May there be no need for a nurse  
 When there is a difference between the joints  
 Lightness falls on the breast of the lance  
 Breach of promise rejoiced enemies of the Shura  
 And healed Persia's lord from the Iyad  
 And it ruled over the Banu Barid at Basra  
 Until they were torn to pieces in the city  
 And kings like Ems in the times of Minna  
 And like Tasm and its sister in later times  
 For you I spent nights seeking aid from this  
 And from tricks of ambitious and evil ones  
 And for your firm wits lest sharp lances  
 Among the steeds make a division  
 Or that near ones should split in enmity

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With what they hoarded up as weapons

Can they remain happy after what has passed  
 What will the enemy say in all the assemblies?  
 Love and trust and leadership forbid  
 That you carry out your anger  
 The truth softens heart to heart  
 Even if it were surety for hearts of stone  
 And when the king is victorious one sees  
 Gratefully what you bring of stability  
 Thus your gifts are sweet with victory      30  
 The hands of the people are on the livers  
 This is the government of noble acts and mercy  
 And glory and bounty and gifts  
 They were absent an hour like the sun is absent  
 But they returned and their light increases  
 His forces defend the times from their evils  
 With proud young men against the rebels  
 Destructive, independent, faithful, proud  
 Wise, strict, brave, and generous  
 Men leave the way open to Abu Musk      35  
 And the necks of slaves submit to him  
 Why should the road not be left to the torrent  
 If each valley is too narrow for its current?

251 And he spoke praising him in Shawwal 347 and he had just sent him 600 dinars. (600)

I fight longing for you but longing is victorious  
 I wonder at flight but union is more amazing  
 Do the days trick me in that I see  
 The hateful afar or the beloved near by?  
 By Allah! how small was the delay in my journey  
 At evening al Hadala and Burrab to the east  
 Eve, when the kindest man to me was one I incensed,  
 The more guided of two roads I put aside      5  
 How many a helping hand for you on dark nights  
 Has proved that the Manichaeans were lying  
 Saves you from death by enemy as you go to them  
 And the one modestly veiled visited you there  
 Many a day like the night of lovers I have hid in  
 As I watched for the sun to set there  
 And my eyes were on the elegant ears as if they  
 Were a bit of night and twixt its eyes a star  
 He has a fineness in the skin over his body  
 That comes and goes over his broad breast  
 I cut through the dark with him with tight reins      10  
 He rebels so I loosen at times and he plays  
 Many a beast I bring down with him as I track it  
 I dismount from him; he is like when I mounted  
 And horses like friends are only too few  
 Though many to the untrained eye  
 If you don't see anything but beauty of markings  
 And of limb, then beauty is hid from you

Allah damn the world as resting place for rider  
 For all of high ambition are punished here  
 O would that I knew how to speak a qasida  
 Without complaining in it or reproaching  
 A thing in me--a bit of it keeps poetry away  
 Yet my heart O daughter of the camp alters  
 And Kafur's nature, when I wish to praise it  
 Or if I do not, dictates to me and I write  
 When a man leaves his family behind him  
 And journeys to Kafur it is not strange  
 A youth who fills deeds with wisdom and judgment  
 And rarities whenever pleased or angry  
 When his hand strikes in war with the sword  
 It is plain the sword strikes by a hand  
 His gifts increase in number as time goes on  
 But the water of the clouds dries up in time  
 Abu Musk is there a bit in a cup for me to take?  
 For I sing while you drink  
 You gave according to measure of our time's hands  
 My soul seeks according to your hands' measure  
 If you dress me not with an estate or governorship  
 Your bounty cloaks and your work plunders me  
 Every man on this festival smiles at his beloved  
 Except me and I weep for one I love and mourn  
 I long for my family and want to meet them  
 But where is the anqa of the west for lovers?  
 And if there were only Abu Musk or them  
 You'd be sweeter to my heart and tastier  
 But every man who bestows favors is beloved  
 And every place that grows glory is sweet  
 The jealous want for you what Allah forbids  
 As do brown spears and the keen steel  
 Before their desire is that, if they escaped it  
 In death, you'd thrive on as their kids grayed  
 As they seek your bounty they are given, assigned  
 If they seek your virtue they are balked  
 If it were right to take your rank you'd give it  
 But some things are not bestowed  
 Most evil of evil ones is one who nightly envies  
 One who nightly ponders his good works  
 You are the one who brought up the suckling king  
 Who had neither mother nor father but you  
 And you were the lion of the den to this cub  
 You had no other claws but the Indian sword  
 You met the lances with generous soul for him  
 Fleeing to death in battle away from shame  
 But it leaves that soul alone which is not base  
 While it ruins the soul that is fearful  
 Your opponents did not lack bravery and energy  
 But one they met was stronger and nobler  
 You beat them and sword flash on helmet was true  
 For them but helmet flash on sword fruitless  
 You unsheathed swords and taught every preacher  
 On every pulpit how to pray and preach

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It is useless to you that men trace genealogies  
 Since noble acts are traced to and end in you  
 What tribe is there whose worth deserves you?  
 Ma'ad ibn Adnan is your ransom and Yarub  
 My pleasure when I saw you was not artificial  
 I had hoped to see you and was pleased  
 My verses and my ambition reproached me for you  
 As if in praising before your praise I sinned  
 But the road was long and I was always 45  
 Sought after for words, and they were booty  
 So they went east until east was not east  
 And to the west until the west was not west  
 When I spoke them their coming was not forbidden  
 By towering wall or rope held tent.

252 And Abu Tayyib learned that some people at the court  
 of Saif al Daula in Aleppo claimed he was dead so he  
 spoke in the year 348. (667)

Where is consolation without family or country?  
 Neither drinking pal nor cup nor quiet  
 I desire of my time that it achieve for me  
 That which the time cannot achieve by itself  
 Do not meet your destiny except without grief  
 So long as your spirit has body for company  
 For the happiness which you enjoyed does not last  
 And grief does not bring back to you the past  
 What hinders the people of love is that they 5  
 Love but know not the world nor comprehend it  
 Their eyes fade with tears and their souls  
 Track every ugly one whose face is pretty  
 Load up! let any fast camel carry you  
 For every parting for me today is desirable  
 What is in your howdahs is no double for my heart  
 Nor is there any value in it if I die of love  
 O you by whom I was named dead afar in his court  
 Crepe hangers' thought is all pledged to occur  
 How often I'm killed and dead according to you 10  
 Then I give a shake and tomb and coffin go  
 A crowd witnessed my burial before they spoke  
 Then they died before they had the grave dug  
 Not everything a man desires can he achieve  
 Winds blow where the boat does not want to go  
 I see your neighbor doesn't protect his honor  
 Nor does the milk flow over your pastures  
 Boredom requites all those near to you  
 And the gift of every lover from you is hate  
 You are angry with those who receive your favors 15  
 Until bother and blame are the end of it  
 Separation has left what was between me and you  
 A desert in which eye and ear are deceivers

The fast camel crawls there after having raced  
 And callouses ask earth about foot pads  
 I accept my clemency so long as it is generous  
 But not forbearance when it is cowardly  
 And I do not stay with wealth that humiliates  
 Nor do I enjoy that which dirties my honor  
 I stayed awake after my journey lonely for you 20  
 Then my rope held steady and my sleep repented  
 If I suffered from a love like your love  
 Then I would be ready for a parting like that  
 I wore out my foal's saddle cloth among others  
 Cheek straps and halter changed at Fustat  
 With the hero Abu Musk in whose bounty  
 Mudhar the golden and Yemen are drowned  
 And if some of his promises are slow  
 My hopes are not slow nor are they weak  
 He is the faithful one and only I remind him 25  
 Of love, but he is testing and proving it.

253 Among those which he spoke in Egypt and did not re-cite to the black and did not mention him in them.  
 (671)

Men before us were friends of their time  
 And worried about great things as we worry  
 And all of them turned away choking with it  
 Even if some of them were happy at times  
 Often one finds good the workings of the nights  
 And then one finds their beauties turbid  
 As if they were not content with us in doubts  
 Of destiny so they attack one they helped  
 Each time that fate makes the shafts grow 5  
 Men fit the lances with spear heads  
 But such intentions of the soul are too small  
 For us to quarrel about and to perish in  
 No young man should meet death  
 In gloomy fashion nor meet it basely  
 And if life were preserved only for the living  
 We'd count our brave man as our most lost  
 And if there were no necessity in death  
 Then it would be only weakness to be coward  
 Everything which was difficult before it occurred 10  
 Is easy for a soul when it happens.

254 And he spoke commemorating the rebellion of Shabib al Uqaili in the year 348. (672)

Your enemy is blamed by every tongue  
 Even if sun and moon were among your enemies

Allah has a secret concerning your exaltation  
 And words of the enemy are a kind of madness  
 Do the enemies seek after what they have seen  
 Established proof or clear demonstration?  
 They saw every one who aimed to betray you tried  
 By betrayal of life or betrayal of the times  
 In spite of Shabib his hand parted from the sword 5  
 And they were companions in all difficulties  
 As if the necks of men said to his sword:  
 Your friend must be Qais for you are Yemeni!  
 So if he was a man he went his way  
 For death is the goal of all living things  
 But he was only a fire in every place  
 Stirring up dust instead of smoke  
 He obtained a life which his enemies longed for  
 A death that makes every coward wish for death  
 He blocked the spear point's blow with his spear 10  
 Nor feared star force or Aldebaran  
 And did not know death above his top knot  
 With borrowed wing fine for flying  
 He had killed warriors until you killed him  
 With weakest warrior and in lowest place  
 Death came to him by a path hidden to  
 Every ear and eye round about him  
 Had it trod a path of arms he'd have repelled it  
 By right arm's length and heart's breadth  
 Fate aimed at him in the midst of his friends 15  
 Confident of his destiny and secure in it  
 Of what use is a huge army gathering round  
 Without any succour or divine aid?  
 Before night, he paid for his crime with himself  
 And he did not give herds of camels  
 Did a rational hand take what you gave him  
 And take those reins in his ingratitude?  
 Did he ride consideration you mounted him on  
 Ride the back of a stallion to rebellion?  
 The benefits doubled his hand until it was as if 20  
 In its grabbing there were no more fingers  
 Where nowadays is there loyalty to masters?  
 Shabib and the trustiest you see are brothers!  
 Allah has judged O Kafur that you are the prince  
 It is not decreed a second to you be seen  
 Why should you choose the bow when  
 One shoots away from you both races in luck?  
 Why do you take care of the spear and the lance  
 Since your bounty thrusts without spear point?  
 And why carry the sword whose belt is long 25  
 Since you are freed from it by events?  
 Wish some good for me whether you give it or not  
 For whatever you want for me will come to me  
 If you hated the movement of the churning heavens  
 Something would hinder it from its movement.

255 He spoke in Egypt in commemoration of a fever which he had in Dhu'l Hijja in the year 348. (675)

The blame of you two is wide of the fault  
 And the force that it has is beyond the word  
 Let me alone for the desert is without a guide  
 And the face of midday has no veil  
 For I wish to find relief in this and in that  
 And I am exhausted by stopping and staying  
 My mount's eyes are like my eyes if I am feverish  
 Every groan of the overworked beast my groan  
 I can reach water without a guide  
 Instead of counting flashes from its clouds  
 My sword and my Lord give protection to my heart  
 When the single person requires a guard  
 I don't say good evening as a guest to misers  
 No hospitality except ostrich bone marrow  
 And when the friendship of men becomes betrayal  
 I repay the smiles with smiles  
 I have my doubts about the one I have chosen  
 Due to my knowledge he is one of mankind  
 Intelligent people love according to qualities  
 But ignorant love is according to appearance  
 I reject a brother, my father and mother's son,  
 When I do not find him of a noble nature  
 I know that parents are often overcome  
 By evil nature in their children  
 I am not satisfied with any virtues  
 That are traced to illustrious ancestors  
 But I am surprised at one who has power and edge  
 Glancing off as a blunt and dull sword's blow  
 And who finds the way to the heights  
 But wears down no camel till it has no hump  
 And I have seen nothing so blameworthy among men  
 As the defecting of the able from perfection  
 I have settled in Egypt's land and neither back  
 Nor forward has the camel moved with me  
 The bed disgusts me though my side  
 Has inclined to meet it only once in a year  
 Few are my visitors, sick is my heart  
 Many the jealous and difficult my goal  
 My body is ailing, my rising forbidden  
 Violent the giddiness without any wine  
 The one who comes to me seems to be ashamed  
 For she does not visit except in the dark  
 I lavished upon her a gown and a bed  
 But she declined them and slept in my bones  
 The skin is too tight for my breath and it sighs  
 So she stretches it in the ways of sickness  
 When she leaves me she washes me as if  
 We two were addicted to sacred ritual  
 As if the dawn drove her away so that her tears  
 Ran from all four corners in showers

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I wait for her moment without any love  
 With a waiting of passionate longing  
 Her promise is true but it is an evil promise  
 When it hits you in agony of bone  
 O daughter of times, with me every daughter  
 How could you alone get through the crowd?  
 You have wounded me with such wounds that here  
 There is no place for swords or arrows  
 O will my hand ever know the touch  
 That manages the reins or the tether? 30  
 And shall I attain my object with a trotter  
 Whose tether is silvered with sweat?  
 Perhaps I shall heal the boiling in my chest  
 With a journey or the lance or sword  
 But the way is blocked that I want to be free in  
 With the freedom of wine from web of sieve  
 If I could part from this lover without farewell  
 I'd leave this land without a good-by  
 The doctor said to me: You have eaten something  
 Your illness is in eating and drinking. 35  
 It's not in his skill for I am a thoroughbred  
 The long stay in stable injures my body  
 It is used to getting dusty in the sortie  
 Rushing from dust cloud to dust cloud  
 For it is restrained and not loose to graze  
 Nor is it in the barley nor bridled  
 And if I am sick yet my courage is not sick  
 And if I am fevered yet my will is not ill  
 And if I surrender I will not stay but rather 40  
 I am safe from one death in another death  
 Enjoy the waking or the sleeping  
 And do not hope for sleep within the tomb  
 For in that third state the meaning  
 Is another meaning than waking or sleeping.

256 And he spoke praising Kafur the Ikshid and he recited  
 it in Shawwal 347 and did not meet him after that.  
 (680)

Wishes once were mine the dye might be white  
 So youth be hid by graying of the locks  
 My nights with beauties made my curls a charm  
 And honor, but my boast now is a fault  
 But how can I blame today what I once desired  
 Pray for what I'd complain of if granted?  
 One color succeeds to another guided every way  
 Like the mist rises at the beams of day  
 In body soul does not grow gray with its graying 5  
 Even if what was on its face was warlike  
 She has claws even if I pull back every claw  
 And fangs when no fangs remain in the mouth

Destiny changes me as it wants but not her  
 I reach life's goal but she is a girl  
 Indeed I have a star that guides my companions  
 When the clouds shift beneath the stars  
 Home lands are expendables and returns to a place  
 Do not provoke me once I journey from it  
 So are the fast trotting camels when they go  
 If not these, eagles have their saddles  
 And I get thirsty but I show no need for water  
 While the heat rays weave above the camel  
 Among my secrets there is one a drinking pal  
 Will not receive, nor will the wine get it  
 I had a pretty woman an hour and then we parted  
 A desert was crossed to another meeting  
 For love is nothing but perplexity and lust  
 A heart opposed to itself and overwhelmed  
 My heart is not a target for singing girls  
 Nor are my fingers mounts for the cups  
 We leave every passion for the points of lances  
 No playing for us except with them  
 We bear them to the jousting on the heavy ones  
 And by that their ferrules are broken  
 Best place in the world is a fast swimming horse  
 And the best of sittings at times is a book  
 And a sea full of water is Abu Musk who has  
 Above all seas rising tides that overflow  
 It exceeds the power of praise until it's as if  
 The finest one can honor in him is only blame  
 The enemy contends with him and then submits  
 As a neck contends with a sword's brightness  
 Most do not meet Abu Musk in common dress  
 Clothing does not protect unless it be iron  
 Broadest chested of those who meet him, behind  
 Archers and spearmen, in front the enemy  
 Sharpest in judgment of those who face him, he  
 Judges a case earth's kings are enraged at  
 His virtue leads men in submission to him

If not, then his gifts and fines do  
 O lion in whose body is the soul of a fierce one  
 How many lions have the souls of dogs?  
 O he takes from the times what is due his soul  
 And such as you give and endow with right  
 For us in this age it is right he disown it  
 For satisfactions are few and complaints long  
 The days have adopted a new habit with you  
 Times flourish though they were a waste  
 No king but you, but kingship is an external

You are a sword and that the scabbard  
 I know that I by being near you calmed my vision  
 Even if the nearness is mingled with distance  
 And what use that a curtain between us is raised  
 If before what I hoped from you is a veil?  
 My greeting is small from no light love for you  
 And I am silent so there may be no response

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In me there are wants and in you is sagacity  
 My silence is plain in this and the prayer  
 I am not desirous of a bribe for the sake of love      35  
 It's weak passion that wants reward for itself  
 Nor do I want anything but to humble my censurers  
 So that my idea may be true to your thought  
 I know some people differed from me eastward  
 And I went west and I conquered and they lost  
 Discord comes except with you for you are unique  
 You are the lion and other kings wolves  
 And if you check the meter as a reader misreads  
 "Wolves" he'd not mistake if he said "flies"  
 Indeed the praise of men is both true and vain      40  
 But your praise is true no falsehood in it  
 When I have love from you wealth is of no account  
 And all that is above the earth is dust  
 I would be nothing but a pilgrim except for you  
 Each day a new country and companions for him  
 But through you the world is beloved to me  
 No parting for me from you except to return.

## 257 He spoke mocking Kafur. (688)

By what paths could nobility come to you  
 Where is the leech cup and scalpel O Kafur?  
 They exceeded their rank who owned your hand  
 For they learned in you a dog was above them  
 Nothing more ugly than a stallion with a penis  
 Having a mother to lead him with no womb  
 Rulers of each people come from among themselves  
 But the rulers of the Muslims are base slaves  
 Is it a goal of religion your mustaches be shaved      5  
 O people nations mock due to their ignorance?  
 Will no youth water an Indian blade with his head  
 To end the complaints and suspicions of men?  
 For he is proof of evil to hearts; those whose  
 Religion is fate and delay and favoritism  
 How exalted is Allah when he abashes his creation  
 And does not support people who think thus.

## 258 And he spoke also mocking him. (689)

Is there in this world no generosity and  
 Has concern ceased from the heart?  
 Is there in this world no place where  
 Settled neighbor enjoys his family?  
 Beasts and servants of Allah become alike  
 Among us as freedmen and those of lineage  
 I do not know whether it is a new illness  
 That plagues men or an old disease

I came to the land of Egypt as a servant  
 It seemed the free among them were orphans  
 As if the Nubian blacks that were there  
 Were crows, around them vultures and owls  
 I hated to praise him since I saw my words  
 Delighted the fools O like the intelligent  
 And when I mocked I knew the feebleness  
 Of my words to a jackal O vile one!  
 But what excuse is there for this and that  
 Since the sick man can't avoid sickness?  
 When the evil doer comes from vileness  
 And suffers no harm whom do I blame?

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259 And he looked at the black one day and said. (690)

If this food were our provision for  
 A guest we would spread it courteously  
 But we are his guests and obviously  
 He spreads for us only lies and calumny  
 Would that he would leave the way free to us  
 May Allah help him and us!

260 And Abu Tayyib wrote to him about a trip to Ramla  
 to see about property of his there and he wanted to  
 find out what the black would think of his journey  
 but he answered: No, by Allah, we do not permit  
 the journey but we will send someone to take care  
 of the matter for you. (691)

Have you sworn not to permit me to go  
 To town to take care of business there?  
 And you have allowed me this unfortunate place  
 Utmost exile and in worst condition  
 Someday when we travel from al Fustat  
 And he pursues me with horses and men  
 You will know the power you parted from in me  
 And that you aimed at my hurt in vain.

261 And he spoke on the day of Arafat and left Egypt in  
 the year 350. (691)

Festival in what state do you return O festival  
 With what past or what things that are new?  
 But my dear ones--desert is between them and me  
 O for desert before you and me and then desert  
 But for eminence she'd not cross what I crossed  
 That strong camel nor the lanky horse

And sweeter than my sword as a bedmate would be  
 A slender girl like it in brightness  
 Time has not left for my heart or my liver 5  
 Anything that eye or neck can enslave  
 O my two wine bearers is there wine in your cups  
 Or is care and wakefulness in your cups?  
 Am I a rock? What is wrong in me that this wine  
 Does not rouse me nor yet this singing?  
 And when I wanted the red wine pure  
 I found it, but my soul's darling was gone  
 What have I found in the world? I am surprised  
 That what I wept for was envied  
 I am at ease in riches as to treasurer and hand 10  
 I am wealthy but my property is promises  
 I have settled with liars as their guest  
 Forbidden hospitality and departure  
 Generosity is in men's hands but their bounty in  
 Tongues, if only they and their bounty were not  
 But death doesn't take a single soul of them  
 Unless his hand has a stick due to the stink  
 With each looseness the belly sphincter breaks  
 Not counted as men nor yet as women  
 Each time an evil slave murders his master 15  
 Or betrays him his training was in Egypt  
 The eunuch became leader of runaway slaves there  
 The free man enslaved and the slave obeyed  
 Egypt's overseers have slept while their foxes  
 Ate too much and still the grapes aren't gone  
 The slave is no brother to a good freeborn man  
 Even if born in clothes of a free man  
 Do not buy a slave unless a stick is with him  
 For slaves are filthy and troublesome 1  
 I never thought I would live to the time when 20  
 A dog would do me dirt and be praised here  
 Nor did I imagine that men would be lost  
 And that the white father's like be found  
 And that the pierced black with his camel lips  
 Would have trembling sycophants obey him  
 Hungry, he eats my provisions and detains me  
 So he be named: Worthy power, sought after.  
 A man whom a pregnant slave woman manages  
 Oppressed with inflamed eyes and weak heart  
 What a mistake it was, alas for one accepting it 25  
 For it long Mahri camels were made  
 In such matters who drinks death enjoys a taste  
 Death for one who is humiliated is sweet  
 Who taught the black eunuch generosity  
 His white people or his royal father?  
 Or his ears bleeding in the hand of slave trader  
 Or his value rejected at two farthings?  
 First to be excused by the vile is little Kafur  
 In each fault some excuses are blame  
 That is because the white stallions are feeble 30  
 In fineness, so what about black eunuchs?

262 And he spoke in Egypt and wrote it to Abd al Aziz  
ibn Yusuf al Khazay. (695)

May their Lord repay Arabs who stay at Bilbais  
For their kindness may their eyes be cooled  
Karakina of Qais ibn Ailan are wide awake  
Their eyelids and sword sheaths are lofty  
And especially Abd al Aziz ibn Yusuf  
For he is their rain shower and stream  
The youth in my eyes adorns the tribe's farthest  
How many chiefs in the area doesn't he adorn?

263 And he spoke mocking Wardan ibn Rabia of Tai with  
whom he stayed on the road from Egypt. (696)

If you are of Tai they are blameworthy  
And their forebears Rabia and his sons  
Or if you are of Tai they were noble  
But Wardan's father is not one of theirs  
At Hisma we passed by one of his slaves  
He dripped filth from his nose and mouth  
He seduced my slaves with his woman  
So he destroyed them and they destroyed him  
And if my horse was unhappy with their hands  
His face is unhappy with my sword.

264 He spoke also mocking him. (697)

May Allah curse Wardan and the girl with him  
His profit of a pig and snout of a fox  
His betrayal was only an indication  
Of what his mother and father were  
When a man makes a profit from his wife's sex  
O he's worst of men--O worst of profits  
O this little pair, lady Wardan and his daughter  
Earning their living in the worst trade  
I disproved the betrayal of the Tai origin  
But don't blame me; many a friend is belied.

265 And he spoke also about the slave who took his horse  
and sword. (697)

I reckoned them as betrayers of the swords  
I cut off their noses with them  
May Allah not pity their heads when they  
Send flying the tops of their skulls  
The sword avenges not a few of them  
Would that there were a hundred thousand

O worst of flesh whose life I took  
 And that went to the belly of the hyena  
 You could have done without your begging of me  
 Who took omens of birds for me and augured  
 I promised this blade whoever it met 5  
 I was afraid of mutiny when you appeared  
 Goodness does not remember if you are named  
 Nor does a pair of eyes follow you streaming  
 When a man alarms me with his betrayal  
 I bring him to the goal he fears.

## 266 And he spoke also. (698)

Busaita you make the rain fall slowly  
 You leave the eyes of my servants confused  
 They thought the ostrich near you a palm  
 They thought the antelope near you a minaret  
 My friends hung on to their saddles  
 But laughter got to them and was hard on them.

267 And he spoke when he entered Kufa describing the road  
 from Egypt and mocking Kafur in the first of the  
 month of Rabia in the year 351. (699)

O all of the mincing women's walks  
 Are ransom for every fast she-camel's gait  
 And every Bujawi that can rescue  
 Though clumsy, for a graceful pace is nothing  
 Moreover they are life lines  
 Tricks to the enemy and defenses against evil  
 With her I beat the desert by a gambler's stroke  
 That might have been one way or another  
 When she took fright there were horsemen ahead 5  
 And bright swords and brown lances  
 So she passed by Nakhla and in her progress  
 Did without the people and the place itself  
 At evening she gave us a choice at al Niqab  
 Of the Wadi of Waters or the Wadi of Villages  
 We said to her: Where is the land of Iraq?  
 She said as we were at Turban: Over there.  
 In Hisma she went with a motion of the west wind  
 Facing the force of the east wind  
 Aiming at Kifaf and Kibd al Wihad  
 And Jar al Buwaira the valley of tamarisks 10  
 She cut through Busaita like a sword  
 Among the ostriches and wild cows  
 To Uqdat al Jauf until she slaked  
 At the water of Jarawi some of her thirst  
 Sawwar and the dawn appeared to her and then  
 Al Shagur appeared in the forenoon

Her galloping brought her at evening to al Jumai  
 And morning to al Adari and then al Dana  
 O that was a night for you at Akush 15  
 The land all dark and signposts hid  
 We arrive at Ruhaima in the middle of it  
 The remainder of it more than what was past  
 When we made camels kneel we set up our spears  
 Over our generous deeds and our eminence  
 And we spent the night kissing our swords  
 And wiping them clean of the enemies' blood  
 So Egypt might know and those in Iraq  
 And those in al Awasim that I am the youth  
 And that I have been true and I have rejected 20  
 I rebelled against those who were presumptuous  
 But not everyone who speaks a word is faithful  
 Not everyone forced to humiliation rejects it  
 And he who has a heart like my heart  
 Splits the heart of destruction to glory  
 But there has to be some tool for the heart  
 And some idea to split the hardest rock  
 And every path that the youth takes  
 Finds his step by the measure of his legs  
 The little slave slept unwitting of our night 25  
 He slept before in blindness not slumber  
 In spite of our closeness there was between us  
 Deserts of his ignorance and blindness  
 Indeed I had thought before this eunuch  
 That the head was the place of reason  
 But when I looked at his wits  
 I knew reason was altogether in the balls  
 What ridiculous things there were in Egypt  
 But it was laughter that was close to tears 30  
 A Nabataean of the people of the black land  
 Taught genealogies of people of the desert  
 And the black who was half lip  
 One spoke to him: You moon of darkness!  
 As for verses I praised him as the rhinoceros  
 At times with poetry at times with spells  
 And this praise was not for him  
 But rather it was satire on mankind  
 Some people have gone astray with their idols  
 But with a wind bag, O no! 35  
 And those were deaf and he was talkative  
 When the farts moved him or the stutters  
 When one's self is ignorant of his worth  
 Others see what he does not see of himself.

268 And he spoke mocking the black. (704)

Heart's core but his heart is too narrow  
 A toast but the belly is too large

His people are dying with rage at the times  
As Fatik and Shabib died of rage  
I intended his castration and then I left him  
He followed me like a sun but it was dark  
When you lack ancestors, reason and generosity  
There is nothing good in life for you.

269 He spoke praising Abu Shuja Fatik nicknamed Majnun  
in the year 348. (704)

No horses to make as a gift and no flocks but  
Speech brings joy if wealth does not rejoice  
So repay the Emir who has been kind unexpectedly  
Without plea though men's gifts must be begged  
Often she repays kind deeds of one near her  
This lazy pearl among virgins of the tribe  
And if there are strong hobbles which prevent me  
From running free, yet there is whinnying  
I do not give thanks because wealth delights me  
Little or much is equal with me  
But I think it ugly that he is generous with us  
And that we by authority's decree are miserly  
For I was growth of waste land meadow and a shower  
Came at dawn, a downpour on earth not salty  
A shower whose effect is clear to the onlookers  
But showers are ignorant of what they bring  
Only a master of sagacity can attain glory  
When action is difficult for masters  
None inherit whose right hands ignore their giving  
None acquire without the sword demanding  
Time spoke a word to him and he understood it  
For time is censorious of the tightfisted  
The lance knows when it is shaken by his hand  
The horseman and hero are unhappy with it  
Like Fatik...but comparison is lacking somewhat  
Like the sun I had said but sun is no trope  
The leader of the lions whose claws feed those  
Who are his cubs with the like of his enemies  
A sword's killer is the body of one killed by it  
For there is an end for swords as for men  
Fear for him protects him in war  
His flocks are unshepherded in far pastures  
His is whatever wild game his spear chooses  
Wild asses, ostrich, boars and wild bulls  
Guests at evening have their desire in his court  
As if sunset's cool was brought for them  
If they desire meat their host hurries it to them  
A cut of it on a platter and even a haunch  
He knows no bad luck either in wealth or children  
Except as he sends guests on their journey  
He waters arid earth with their drink's leavings  
Cream of camel's milk and wine of pure color

He entertains by his sword hourly dripping blood  
 As if each moment guests arrived and returned  
 Life flows round about him in mingled fashion  
 Some of it the enemies, some sheep and camels  
 Distance does not prohibit his gifts to men afar  
 Nor are children kept by weakness from them  
 His the sharpest sword among heroes of two armies  
 And swords are guided while spears go astray  
 It seems his fame is weaker than sight of him  
 Among men some are water and some are mirage  
 Indeed the jealous call him Majnun the mad one  
 As swords clash and sometimes reason clogs  
 He hits armies with them no escaping him or them  
 In his cleaving even if armies are mountains  
 And so for the enemy when his claws are in them  
 Clemency and lions cannot be joined for them  
 Destiny's course in him always terrifies them  
 Openly but fate's mishaps come unexpectedly  
 His boldness attains the height of nobility  
 They gain it not who guard against the comer  
 While kings adorn themselves his ornaments are  
 Indian swords and quivering lances' nipples  
 Abu Shuja, father of the bold without exception  
 Terror feeds him with fearful battles  
 You possess praise until for those who boast  
 There is neither hah, nor mim nor dal  
 Upon him there is a double coat of it  
 So that he has no need of a coat of mail  
 How should I hide good deeds you conferred  
 You have overflowed with gifts O bounteous  
 You were kind in thinking of my safety and good  
 The generous are the height of tact  
 So you made it public and the news spread  
 And hope in your hands reached the stars  
 My praise is as long as he who wears it tall  
 Praise for the dwarfs is dwarf like  
 If you had pride to be conceited among men  
 Your worth by their worth could be haughty  
 As if you were not content with yourself  
 As friend, until you excel in excellence  
 You did not consider yourself safe in its heart  
 Until you were spendthrift of fear for it  
 If it were not for hardship all men would rule  
 Generosity become poor and boldness death  
 And even though each man achieves his capacity  
 Not every runner has the legs of a fast camel  
 These times have left off ugliness through him  
 For most men he is the best and the finest  
 Hero's memory is second life and witness  
 Hardship feeds it and exuberance of life.

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eleventh night of Shawwal in the year 350. (711)

Grief disquiets me and courtesy holds back  
 The tears between these two rebel and submit  
 These dispute over tears of my sleepless eyes  
 One brings them and the other takes them  
 Sleep after Abu Shuja is frightened  
 And the night tired and the stars lame  
 I become a coward at the departure of my beloved  
 But if my soul has a taste of death I am brave  
 The anger of my enemy increases my harshness 5  
 Blame of a friend pains me and I am anxious  
 Life for the ignorant or forgetful is skimming  
 Both what is past and what is yet to come  
 And for him who mistakes the value of himself  
 Making insatiable search for the impossible  
 Where is he whose monument was two hoary pyramids?  
 What were his people, his times, his death?  
 The tradition remained with their contemporaries  
 Then ruin overtook them and they followed  
 Achievements did not content Abu Shuja's heart 10  
 Before his death, nor rank he had attained  
 We had thought that his house was filled with  
 Gold but he died and all the house was waste  
 But then nobility and scimitars and lances and  
 Daughters of Awaj were all he collected  
 Glory is perishable and nobility is an agreement  
 So nobility's beauty cannot live from them  
 Men are living at too low a level in your times  
 For you to live by them; your worth is higher  
 Cool my heart with a word if you are able 15  
 You could oppose as you wished and be useful  
 Never before this was there from you for a friend  
 Anything which made him doubt or gave pain  
 Indeed I knew you and no calamity came near you  
 Except what a wise heart dispelled from you  
 Or a hand making its battles and gifts as it were  
 Duties you were responsible for voluntarily  
 O you who changed your garments every day  
 And now content with a garment not taken off  
 You did not cease to put robes on those who wanted 20  
 Until one day you put one on not honorary  
 You did not cease to take on every heavy burden  
 Until a burden came that could not be accepted  
 And you stayed to see your lance was not ready  
 For what attacked you nor would your sword cut  
 By my father all alone! and the numerous army  
 Wept; but tears are the worst of weapons  
 And when you were left with weeping as weapons  
 You feared in your heart and your cheeks wet  
 A hand came to you which finds of equal value 35  
 The gray falcon and the speckled crow  
 Who is there now for assembly, army or raid?  
 Lost in your loss a star rising no more

And who will you take as successor for the guests  
 Who lose their way while you go not astray?  
 Ugly be your face O time for it  
 Is a face that is veiled with all ugliness!  
 Did such a one as Abu Shuja Fatik die but  
 He who envied him, stub toed eunuch, lives?  
 The chopped off hands lie near his head  
 One cries to a neck there: Will no one strike?  
 You let stay the worst liar you ever let stay  
 You took the truest who spoke and was heard  
 You left the most stinking wind ever damned  
 Stole the sweetest perfume that ever spread  
 Today the blood of all the frightened animals  
 Is calm and it is as if he loomed far off  
 The knots of the whip and his horses are at peace  
 Their back legs and forelegs come together  
 The sortie canceled, no spear point drips blood  
 Above the shaft, and no sword clashes  
 He turns away and each friend and drinking pal  
 After privacy takes a last walk saying good-by  
 He who was a refuge for every people and  
 Found pasture for his sword in every nation  
 If he stopped among Persians there he was lord  
 Chosroes, neck yielded to him and stooped  
 Or if he settled among Romans there he was Caesar  
 Or if he stayed with Arabs among them Tuba  
 He was the fastest rider in the jousting  
 On horseback, but yet death was quicker  
 May the hand of a horseman not grip the lance  
 After him, nor four feet carry the steed.

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271 And there came to him at Kufa a friend with an apple  
 spiced and on it Fatik's name. So he took and read  
 it and said. (716)

Its wittiness recalls Fatik  
 For something of spice is in his name  
 I am not forgetful but yet  
 The smell of it renews for me his perfume  
 What a youth death plundered  
 Not even his mother knew what she had borne  
 She would not have pressed him to her breast  
 Had she known what she clasped to her there  
 The kings in Egypt have its wealth  
 But they, not they have his spirit  
 More generous than their bounty is his economy  
 More laudable than their eulogy is his blame  
 More noble than their lives is his death  
 More useful than their wealth is his poverty  
 Truly his death in his house  
 Was like the wine that nobility pours out

For that is the water which one drinks  
 And that is his taste which one savors  
 And he whose spirit earth was too narrow for  
 Finds it natural his body is cramped by her.

272 And Abu Tayyib spoke after his departure from the  
 City of Peace recalling his journey from Egypt and  
 lamenting the death of Fatik and he recited it on  
 the twelfth day of the first half of Shaban 352.  
 (718)

How long will we follow the stars in darkness  
 When their journey is not with hoofs or feet?  
 And do not feel in the eyelids what one feels  
 In lost sleep as a traveler wakes the night  
 The sun has blackened the white of our faces but  
 Not blackened our white locks or braids  
 And their condition would be under one judgment  
 If we judged by the judgment of the world  
 We do not let the water cease from traveling  
 Going in the clouds or in the water bag 5  
 I do not chide the camel since with her I protect  
 My heart from grief and my body from sickness  
 With back legs I drove her front legs from Egypt  
 Until we shot away from Jawsh and Alam  
 Those desert ostriches exhausted the saddled ones  
 Matching the camels' soft tether with bridle  
 With young fellows who chose danger and delight  
 In what comes, content with chance arrows' fall  
 They display to us as they toss off their turbans 10  
 Turbans created black without a veil  
 Pale cheeked, they spear those they pursue among  
 The horsemen as they drive off the camels  
 They get with the spear what is beyond its power  
 But do not achieve the limit of their desire  
 It is in the time of ignorance except that they  
 Due to their good nature are in truce months  
 Casting spears which though they cannot talk  
 Teach them birds' screams for the brave  
 The camels speed with us their lips frothing 15  
 Their hoofs green with ragal and yanam  
 We beat them with whips of drivers, muzzled from  
 Bushy growth, we desire a growth of glory  
 And where is its growth after his growth  
 Abu Shuja the chosen of Arabs and non-Arabs?  
 There is no other Fatik in the Egypt we went to  
 Nor a successor to him among all mankind  
 Those who are unlike him in character when alive  
 Are like him when dead in their rotten bones  
 I miss him and it is as if I am going to seek him 20  
 But the world will not repay me for the loss

I can't stop smiling at my camel when she looks  
 At what colors her hoofs with blood  
 I brought her among the idols to show her them  
 But I didn't find among them idol's chastity  
 Until I came back and my pen had a word for me:  
 Glory is the sword's, glory is not the pen's  
 Always write with us after the writing with it  
 If I slip, my ransom is I have little wit  
 It made me hear and my cure was what it advised me 25  
 For indeed we are servants to the swords  
 He who fulfills his needs other than by a sword  
 Answers every question of How with No  
 People imagine it is weakness brings us to them  
 And that to approach tends to suspicion  
 But a failure of justice cannot stop harshness  
 Among men, even if they are from the same womb  
 So let there be no visits unless you visit them  
 With hands prepared for the polished sword  
 In every case its edges decide for death 30  
 In what is between the avenger and the avenged  
 Keep its hilt clean of them so that blame can  
 Not reach it in my hands nor yet stinginess  
 What is hard to see is contemptible to vision  
 For the waking eye is like the dreaming one  
 Do not be scandalized at people and disappointed:  
 The wounded's complaint at crows and vultures  
 Be on your guard against men but conceal it  
 And do not let a smiling mouth confuse you  
 Faithfulness is rare, you do not often meet it 35  
 Trust scarce, either in word or promise  
 Praise to my soul's Creator since its pleasure is  
 What other souls see as the peak of pain  
 Destiny is amazed at my bearing its misfortunes  
 At my body's patience in burning misfortunes  
 A time for going astray, would the time of life  
 Were among another people of bygone nations  
 Whose sons came in times that were in their youth  
 And made them happy, but we come in old age.

273 He spoke mocking Thabba ibn Yazid al Utby, and he is  
 frank in his satire in this qasida because he had no  
 understanding so as to be aware of the attack. And  
 when this qasida was read to al Mutanabbi he refused  
 to recite it and I too, by Allah, dislike writing it  
 and commenting on it and prefer not to pass it on.  
 However, I relate it for what there is in it and may  
 Allah, be He exalted, forgive whoever is in error so  
 that he may not slip before Him. He spoke it in  
 Jumada in the latter part of 353. (723)

How unjust people are to Thabba  
 And to his long breasted mother

They knocked his father on his head  
     And jumped the overcome mother  
 There is no honor for one who is dead  
     Nor love for those fooled with  
 But I have said what I said  
     Out of pity and not out of love  
 And this is deceit for you since  
     You'd be excused if you only knew  
 But it's not your fault that he  
     Was killed, for it was a fight  
 Nor was the seduction your fault  
     For that was abuse  
 And it's not your fault that  
     Your mother was a shameful drab  
 It's no hardship to a dog  
     That he is a son-of-a-bitch  
 It did not bother her who got to her  
     But it did bother her loins  
 He did not fool with her, though  
     Her anus bothered his penis  
 Some people blame Thabba  
     But they do not blame his heart  
 And it was his heart lusted  
     And forced the body with his tail  
 If he sees the stalk of a thing  
     He loves the hardness of the stalk  
 O best of men for himself  
     And softest of men for riding  
 O most deceiving of men as to ancestry  
     In the most smelly graveyard dust  
 And cheapest of men as to his mother  
     She sells to a thousand lovers  
 All of those on the make are arrows  
     For Miriam and she is the quiver  
 And it is nothing for one who has clap  
     To arrange a meeting with doctors  
 There is no difference between a drab  
     And proper girl except a go-between  
 O you who murder the guest  
     His profit water-milk and water bags  
 And for fear of every comrade  
     Night stays with you beside him  
 Thus you were created  
     And who can overcome his Lord?  
 And who cares about blame  
     When he is accustomed to profit?  
 But don't you see stallions in the palms  
     Herd after herd of them?  
 They roam among your women  
     Inflamed with them for some time  
 And they roundabout you watch  
     And their cunts are wet  
 And all the inflamed mules  
     Show that they envy the herd

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So put your heart at rest O Thabba  
 Where can one leave off conceit?  
 And if they betray you, by my life,  
 For long they betrayed his friends  
 Why should you desire it?  
 For you already display fear  
 You are nothing but a flea  
 It ruins you as women's protector  
 When you were snoring proudly  
 You were farting out of fear  
 And if we went off a little  
 You started bearing spear and sword  
 And you said: Would that in my hand  
 Were reins of tall short-hair horse  
 And if you knew my meaning  
 You would discover your affliction  
 And if you are ignorant of my meaning  
 Then it is similar to yourself.

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274 He spoke praising Dillar ibn Kashkrawaz who had just  
 come to Kufa to fight the Kharajites who gathered  
 there from the Banu Kilab. But the Kharaji dispersed  
 before the arrival of Dillar at Kufa. (726)

As you claim, every one claims his reason sound  
 Who knows the ignorance that is in him?  
 You are the first to blame when there is reproof  
 More in need of guilt than those who blame  
 They say: There is no lover like you among men  
 Find one like I love and you'll find my like  
 A lover compares women to his thin sword  
 The fineness of their bodies to the polish  
 And brunettes to tawny lances except that for me  
 Their prey is my dear, spears my messengers  
 I lost a heart where virtue didn't stay a night  
 Except as shining teeth and dark eyes  
 A beauty does not forbid ambition by her parting  
 Or win it by union with one who weeps her loss  
 Let me take what no one yet has taken in rank  
 Difficult heights are hard, the easy easy  
 You would like one to get to the top cheaply  
 But before the honey no way but bee's sting  
 You warned us of death when horsemen clashed  
 You did not know to what end they came  
 For I am not a fool if I purchase my death  
 With favors of Dillar ibn Kashkrawaz for me  
 The dangerous lances are bitter between us  
 We recall the Emir's sweet successes  
 If I knew these things as cause of his being here  
 My joy would grow as battles grow  
 The two Iraq's land would never lack discord  
 To call you here to expose fear and sterility

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When the steel was dull in our blades we remained  
To draw your memory sharper than any edge  
We attack their forelocks with your name in battle  
More piercing than darts and than arrows  
And if it was after a battle that you came to us  
Yet your memory put the enemy to flight before  
I always treasured in my heart before our meeting  
The desire of the horse's hoofs for the road  
If you had not come to us we'd have come to you  
As exiles choose a horse over their family  
Many a fine horse who passes waste land and meadow  
Refuses his fodder until our pot is boiling  
So you see the favor of a visit is shared  
Yours double favor in intention and action  
He who follows the shower in search of provision  
Is not one to whose camp the shower comes  
I'm not one of those whose heart pretends love  
But busy with affairs to avoid a visit  
The Kilab intend to take over the government  
To whom have they left lambs and camels?  
Their Lord refused to leave beasts their wilds  
To make safe the abominable lizards they eat  
Dillar has led to them all the high war horses  
Palm fronds are topped by their prancing  
And his hand pounded the earth with every horse  
Whose hooves were without the iron shoes  
So they turned, wanting aid they left aid behind  
They sought with their feet what was in hand  
They feared loss of flocks but there was defeat  
They found out defeat is worse than loss  
They guided to us without intending it  
A generous nature who leads words with deeds  
He follows the tracks of war with bounty as  
Spear wounds are tended by a physician  
His sword and his gifts heal every complaint of  
The sick, even bereavement in a mother  
Modest, the sun melts at the beauty of his face  
If she came in love he'd withdraw to shade  
He is brave as if war were a lover of his  
If he visits she ransoms with horses and men  
Copiously watered his soul isn't thirsty for wine  
Thirsty, his hand cannot slake due to bounty  
Authority of Dillar and the greatness of his rank  
Are witness to Allah's unity and justice  
While Dillar exists he will brandish his sword  
No lion or his cubs show teeth in this world  
While Dillar exists his hand will be open  
No creature pretends to lawful generosity  
He is a youth, let not purity hope to be perfect  
In those not purifying their hands from greed  
May the Merciful not cut a root that brought him  
For I see that goodness comes of a good root.

## AMIDIYYAT

275 And he spoke praising Abu Fadl Muhammad ibn Husain  
ibn al Amidiyya when he met him at Arrajan. (732)

Your love is known whether you dissemble or not  
Your weeping whether your tears flow or not  
How many friends your patience and smiles deceived  
When they saw you but within was the unseen  
The heart commanded the tongue and the eyelids  
To hide it but your body was enough to tell it  
May Mahri camels stumble at dawn except for one  
Like a picture wearing its painted silks  
I envy him the paintings on his curtains; if I 5  
Were them I'd hide until one appeared  
May the hands never be poor who set them on it  
Chosroes standing guard and Caesar too  
Two guard a pair of eyes in one of the howdahs  
That go, and my heart is the eye hollows  
I had been warned of their departure before this  
If it were useful for a doomed one to be wary  
If able, when their scouts started to leave camp,  
I'd have forbidden every cloud from dripping  
For since cloud is brother to raven of parting 10  
Its cry at their leaving produces rain  
And then the camels cannot plod through a valley  
Without splitting the green garment on it  
They bear as it were gardens except they will  
Capture hearts as wild cows and their young  
By their glances they deny my weak hand its spear  
And my little finger disowns my two rings  
Time has given me what I do not accept as a gift  
It planned for me but I wished for better  
So to Arrajan O horse, for this is 15  
My will which shatters spears to splinters  
If I were to do what you want done  
Your stars would not split the turbid dust  
Take me to Abu Fadl who fulfills my vow  
To come to the sea most filled with gems  
Men judge in favor of his face and may I avoid  
Unwilling to fulfill or falling short of it?  
I have made a bracelet for whatever hand announces  
Ibn Amid as for slave saying: Allah is great!  
If his horses and his weapons do not rescue me 20  
When shall I lead an army against the enemy?  
By my father and mother, an orator! in his word  
Is the price to buy hearts and sell them

One to whom war does not show anyone advancing  
 Against him nor does anyone see him retreating  
 He gelds the stallion warriors with his dye  
 Saffron whatever they wear as armor  
 The feeble reed in his hand earns  
 Eminence and honor over the stone deaf spear  
 And his fingers when they touch it make it show 25  
 A coquette's pride and if it walks it swaggers  
 One who when his letters reach a land  
 Before the army, make an army turn in disorder  
 You are the only one when you ride on a road  
 And who goes behind when you ride on a lion?  
 Men pluck the word at the time when it grows  
 But you pluck the word when it flowers  
 And it is accompanied by listeners if it goes  
 And its beauty is doubled if it is repeated  
 When you are silent the most eloquent speaker 30  
 Is a pen that takes your fingers as a pulpit  
 And letters of which the enemy cuts the envelope  
 To read there spear shafts, points and armor  
 Those who envy you call you chief and say no more  
 But your Creator called you the great chief  
 Your qualities are deputies to eyes for His words  
 Like writing fills the ears of one who reads  
 Have you seen the spirit of my camel in any camel  
 Moving her front leg and hard hoof smoothly?  
 She left the tamarisk smoke in her native land 35  
 Seeking the people who burn ambergris  
 Her knees pretended generosity by not kneeling  
 Lest she fall where was no fragrant musk  
 So she came to you with bleeding pads as if  
 Her feet were shod with red carnelian  
 She hurried to you ahead of time's hand  
 She found it busy with both hands in thought  
 Who will inform the Arabs that I after them  
 Have witnessed Aristotle and Alexander?  
 I tired of camel slaughter so I became a guest 40  
 Of one killing gold purses for one he hosts  
 And I heard Ptolemy explaining his books  
 As a ruler, a bedouin and a city dweller  
 And I met all the men of learning as if  
 Allah brought back their souls and times  
 They were set out for us in order from the start  
 Then came summation as you came at last  
 O would that the weeper whose tears grieve me  
 Had looked at you as I looked to pardon me  
 And she would see virtue not repelled by virtue 45  
 The east sun rising and clouds as rivers  
 I of all men have the best of places  
 Happiest in my camel, most profitable in trade  
 Zuhal, even though stars are his people, if he  
 Were with you, would be in nobler company.

276 There was at the assembly of Ibn Amid an incense burner filled with myrtle and narcissus which hid its fire while the smoke came out of the opening so Abu Tayyib spoke. (740)

Loveliest of things that the soul can love  
 And the sweetest that the nose can smell  
 The spreading of the incense is as if  
 Its coals were myrtle and narcissus  
 But we do not see the flame that stirs it  
 Does your continuous glory feed it?  
 For those who stand round about it  
 Have heads which envy their feet.

277 And he spoke congratulating him on the New Year and praising him. (741)

The New Year comes and you are its purpose  
 Its fire stick bringing the fire it intends  
 This glance which it receives from you  
 Feeds it until its like in another year  
 It swerves from you, until the last day  
 You are its overseer, its eye and slumber  
 We in the land of Persia are happy  
 This dawn which we see is its birth  
 The kings of Persia magnify it until  
 All the days of the year envy it  
 We do not put on crowns for it until  
 The hills and the valleys wear them  
 Among them one does not compare Chosroes Abu  
 Sassan or his children with his rule  
 His language Arabic, his ideas from Greek  
 Philosophy, his manners are Persian  
 Each time one gift says: I am his bounty  
 A second says: This is his economy  
 How should my shoulder not touch the sky  
 When the sword belt on it is his belt?  
 His right hand girded me with a sword  
 His ancestors produced only one of it  
 Each time it unsheathes, lights beam from it  
 The sun thinks she is shining on it  
 They pictured it on the sheath for fear of  
 Losing it; the image's effect is its cover  
 It is not barefoot but shod with gold  
 It bears a sea whose crazing is the foam  
 It splits the armored warrior  
 Not yielding its edges until his saddle  
 Destiny has joined its edge and his hand  
 And my praise so its unique things gather  
 I have a necklace of beauty spots in his bounty  
 Its skin is precious with pock marks

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His bounty's fast horses taught us horsemanship  
 Left his saddle cloth and his hard riding  
 They hoped for peace with us but did not see it  
 The lands they traveled in were his lands  
 Shall my excuse to the gallant Abu Fadl 20  
 Be the offer of the black of my eye as his ink?  
 I have become sick with the intensity of shame  
 Generosities of one who caused it tended it  
 Shortcoming in what I said of him was not equal  
 To his rank until he praised it by criticism  
 I have been a hunter of the falcon's mistress  
 But the highest of the stars I cannot reach  
 Often what the word cannot express about him  
 Is what the heart conceals as its conviction  
 I am not accustomed to see the like of Abu Fadl 25  
 This that I come to him with is usual to him  
 There is an excuse for one drowning in the waves!  
 Plainly he should omit counting them  
 Victory is in the bounty he spreads, but poetry  
 Is my support and Ibn Amid supports that  
 My thoughts gained experience but not nobility  
 I have not his eloquence nor strength in me  
 He wrongs bounty whenever riders descend with him  
 He arranges that providers bring out a sea  
 He overwhelms me and goodness wishes now 30  
 That words were among things he ransoms  
 I never heard of anyone who gave gifts  
 And desired that among them was his heart  
 Allah created him the most eloquent of all men  
 Though a native Kurd he made himself an Arab  
 Most worthy of the showers of praise for himself  
 In times when all men are his grasshoppers  
 As when the prophets appear in the world  
 And a mission occurs when corruption spreads  
 The brightness of the rising moon adorns 35  
 The night then, and darkness does not harm it  
 Thoughts are many as to how we shall be guided  
 As his slaves are guided to their chief lord  
 For that which we have of flocks and horses  
 Is his as his gift and leading  
 We are sending forty of the Mahri kind  
 Each Mahri recited in its parade ground  
 This number, may you live it, the body sees as  
 Goal but does not see how it can be doubled  
 So station them for the heart has trained them 40  
 A station that excels that of fine horses.

278 And there came to Abu Tayyib a letter from Abu Fath  
 Ibn Amid recalling his joy and love for him so he  
 spoke impromptu. (750)

In the writing of men a letter has come  
 Every hand ransoms the hand of the writer  
 It tells of his relationship in respect to us  
 And recalls what we found of his love  
 It amazes its reader with what he sees  
 And flashes lightning at faults he finds  
 When mankind hear the words of it  
 It creates envy in their hearts  
 So I spoke and it devoured what I had said  
 Like the lion who is son of a lion does.

279 And he spoke also bidding farewell to Ibn Amid at  
 his journey to the land of Persia in the year 354.  
 (750)

I forget but I do not forget parting reproaches  
 Nor shame that increases the blush on cheeks  
 Nor the night I found short within the tent  
 While my hand was long on her neck and necklace  
 What is wrong with me on a day I hate like this?  
 At the farewell I will be close to distance  
 Though loss is not particular in the least yet I  
 Lost, but not my tears and my passion  
 This is desire: the eager one enjoying his like 5  
 Even if he hasn't a bit of wealth nor begs it  
 Anger at destiny is like fire in the vitals  
 But it is rage of a prisoner at his bonds  
 If you see that I don't stay long in any land--  
 Ruin of my sheath is unsheathing my edge  
 On the day of jousting the lances fall near me  
 I defend my honor and my courage enjoys it  
 My days change as does my life and my dwelling  
 Camels do not think about bad or good times  
 Faces of the young men are veiled out of modesty 10  
 They have no fear of the heat or the cold  
 A modest face is not the nature of a wolf  
 But rather it is the nature of the red lion  
 If love doesn't authorize them in people's camp  
 A spear is authority, fear better than love  
 They avoid the weakness of kings for that which  
 Abounds among the kings of bounty  
 He who espouses the name of Ibn Amid Muhammad  
 Can travel amid the fangs of snakes and lions  
 He it is who changes swift poison to weakness 15  
 And transforms their jaws into toothless gums  
 By his blessing meadows suffice for camels  
 They come to him hearing no guide but thunder  
 They come across water that presents itself  
 Sip with their lips at pools rimmed with roses  
 As if earth intended our thanks be given him  
 Nor do plains let us descend due to gifts

Our view that of ascetics in leaving all others  
 In coming to him we seek content in rule  
 What they hope for we hope for in all the gardens 20  
 Of Arrajan so we do not despair of paradise  
 The necks of the horses turn away from the guests  
 With the turning of beasts fearful of the hunt  
 They throw their forelocks at death in haste  
 As watering grouse are deaf flying to water  
 The actions of swords trace themselves  
 To him though swords are traced to India  
 When distinguished noblemen come in his service  
 Their lineage is higher than father or mother  
 A hero whose eyes destroy the hostility of men 25  
 Much sickness cannot make sick his eyes  
 He differs from them in nature, character, rank  
 He is too great to hate though he may do so  
 He changes the color of the night for the enemy  
 With panoply of flags for conquering soldiers  
 When they watch for dawn they see before light  
 Cavalry rushing forward as dawn cannot rush  
 Scattering they cannot guard against the rising  
 Nor watch for them in hollows or heights  
 They are loaded when they return from the melee 30  
 With much booty for slaves apart from men  
 Every land stirs up dirt for his dust clouds  
 They are like the stripes on a burdah  
 If there is a Mahdi whose guidance one foretells  
 He is it; if not, he is guided and no Mahdi  
 These times make us sick with such a promise  
 And deceive one in whose hand is the cash  
 Is not the best thing a good which is not hidden  
 Or if guidance is hid then it is not guided  
 O keenest intelligence and most generous in gifts 35  
 Bravest in heart, most merciful in bowels  
 With the finest turban whether seated or riding  
 Whether on a great horse or the high pulpit  
 Days were most gracious in bringing us together  
 While we praised we could go on with praise  
 They made a single farewell in threefold form  
 Your beauty, your known wisdom and your glory  
 I have attained a reward except that I am  
 Ashamed for my people I attained it alone  
 Everyone who shares in the morning of my joy 40  
 Knows one will not see the like of it again  
 So be generous from the heart since I go, for I  
 Leave my heart to one whose virtue is in me  
 Even if my body were to leave its life with you  
 I say it happened without blame to the bond.

## ADUDIYYAT

280 And he spoke praising Abu Shuja Adud al Daula  
Fennachosroe. (758)

O pain! the exchange for my word, O wonder!  
For one who goes and the price is her memory  
I suffer who never saw her beauties  
Wonder's root and pain's was sight of her  
A beauty who as long as I was alone with her  
Saw her visage in my vision  
She kissed my eyes and she cheated me  
For she kissed her own mouth in that  
Would that she would continue to find refuge  
And may he continue to give shelter  
All of the wounded whose peace was hoped for  
She astounded with her eyes but for one heart  
Each time she smiled my cheeks grew wet  
With a rain whose lightning was her teeth  
She was one to shake her braids into my hand  
I put their spices into the wine  
In a land where the veil is required  
For beauties, they cannot be compared to her  
They met us and the camels were on the move  
And they were pearls whose water dripped  
It was as if all the wild cows  
Were saying: You should beware and they too!  
For them there are those whose swords drop blood  
When the tongue of a lover names her  
I love the land between Homs and Khunasary  
Everyone loves those that live there  
Where her cheeks and the apples of Lubnan met  
And my teeth over the Houmai wine  
I have spent summers there in desert heat  
I spent winters on plains that were cold  
If the meadows had shrubs we grazed them  
If a settlement was noticed we raided it  
Or if wild asses came up like a wandering cloud  
We chased their leaders with fast horses  
Or if a herd of camels crossed they were left  
To wander hamstrung among the drinkers  
And the horsemen pursued and were pursued  
Running with long lance and with short  
Their killing surprised the mailed warriors, but  
They never looked at killing after this  
And I observed kings by the dozens  
And traveled until I saw their masters

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And those whose fates were in their hands  
 To command them for themselves or to forbid  
 Abu Shuja of Persia Adud al Daula  
 Fennachosroe Shahinshah  
 I name them not to increase their fame  
 But rather for pleasure as we recall them  
 You bring the benefits of words to us 25  
 As those esteemed bring their reverence  
 He is most glorious to whom his gifts come  
 Most precious in his wealth and rank  
 If his horses could know of his giving he would  
 Not like them to see him content with them  
 Wine has no part in his generosity  
 If he feels dizzy he repays it  
 Wine only accompanies his bounteous moods  
 But wine falls short of the lowest of them  
 His diversions rejoice his singing girls 30  
 And then he brings their joy to an end  
 Each of these girls makes lament when given  
 Breaking the strings and the lute itself  
 They float like motes in the foam  
 Of bounty of the Emir's hand that flows  
 His crown shines on his forehead  
 As his words make a dawn of its meanings  
 Their east and their west submit to him  
 He himself thinks little of their world  
 The desires gather in his heart 35  
 One of them would fill the heart of the times  
 And if its joy would come in times more  
 Spacious than these it would last forever  
 And the opposed armies would become one  
 And the living would stumble over the dead  
 The two opposed fires would turn in the heaven  
 Its moons prostrate before their splendor  
 Horseman who protects with himself as armor  
 Battle praises him as do their horsemen  
 If his hand were to disown itself out of modesty 40  
 In war, we would know its tracks  
 And how should that which is its whip be hid  
 And the sting of death and some of its marks?  
 There is reason for his excuse if he is proud  
 Of the world and its sons and kills them  
 If the universe denied his favors  
 He himself would not go against his nature  
 Like the sun they do not ask from what they do  
 Any profit for themselves nor any pay  
 Let sultans administer what you entrust to them 45  
 And take refuge with him who is their opposer  
 But do not deceive yourself that the command  
 Is another Emir's even if it boasts of it  
 For indeed kingship is lord of a kingdom  
 Whose perfume pervades from east to west  
 He smiles though his face may be darkened  
 The enemy's peace is for him like their war

Men are like servants of the heathen gods  
 His servants are like those unified by Allah.

281 And he spoke praising him and commemorating his journey to him through the Sha'ab Bewan. (766)

Valley of Sha'ab, sweetest among valleys  
 As the time of spring among the seasons  
 Even though an Arab youth is here  
 A stranger in face and hand and tongue  
 A playground of the jinns, and if Solomon were  
 To travel here he would need an interpreter  
 It seems so good to our horsemen and their horses  
 That I fear they will be inclined to rest here  
 We start at dawn with the branches dropping 5  
 The like of seed pearls on their forelocks  
 I traveled on as they veiled the sun from me  
 Bringing me enough of the rays of light  
 The east threw some of them on my clothes  
 Like dinars that flee from the fingers  
 They had fruits that told you what they held  
 By way of drink ready without any cups  
 And waters that rustled there over pebbles  
 With purl of bracelets on singing girls' hands  
 If it was Damascus my reins would be turned back 10  
 By one skilled in tharid in Chinese bowls  
 There is aloes wood piled up for the guests  
 With that the fires are spicy as they smoke  
 One stops there with the heart of a hero  
 And departs from there with a coward's heart  
 It is a home from which the ghost did not depart  
 That accompanied me to Naubandjan  
 And when the gray doves sing here 15  
 The songs of the singing girls responded  
 Those in the valley have greater need than doves  
 For clarity when they sing and lament  
 The two descriptions approach each other nearly  
 But the two described are very far apart  
 In Sha'ab Bewan my horse said:  
 Do we have to leave here for the jousting?  
 Your father Adam set the pattern of disobedience  
 And taught you how to depart from gardens.  
 And then I said: When I saw Abu Shuja  
 I was consoled for the world and this place 20  
 For men and the world are a highway  
 To the one who has no second in the creation  
 I taught myself to speak about them  
 Like learning jousting without a spear  
 By Adud al Daula they are defended and honored  
 There are no hands where there is no forearm  
 Nor any grip on the cutting sword  
 Nor joy in the brown flexible lance

They name him the refuge of their members  
 On the day of a virgin war or an old one  
 No one is named with a name like Fennachosroe 25  
 Nor nicknamed like Fennachosroe  
 His virtues are not understood by thinking  
 Nor by tales about him or by eyewitness  
 The lands of men are dust and fear  
 The land of Abu Shuja is safety  
 He protects every merchant from thieves  
 And guarantees to the sword every criminal  
 When their cargoes require a safeguard  
 They are defended on plain and mountain  
 They spend the night without associates 30  
 Crying to those who pass: Do you see me?  
 His magic is every Mashrafi sword  
 Against every deaf basilisk and snake  
 Yet his great wealth is not charmed from bounty  
 Nor his generous flocks against contempt  
 A hero defends the boundaries of Persia  
 Urging survival with the help of destruction  
 With a blow that stirs the feelings of fate  
 No striking second and third lute strings  
 As if skulls' blood among scattered hair 35  
 Dressed lands with feathers of grouse  
 So if the hearts of lovers were driven there  
 They would not fear glances of lovely women  
 I had not seen before him two lion cubs  
 Like his cubs nor yet two Mahri racers  
 More violent in contending for a noble stock  
 More like in appearance to pure blooded father  
 Nor more frequent in the assembly listening to: 40  
 Such a one broke a spear in such a one.  
 The first vision they saw was the heights  
 They were attached to them before their time  
 The first words they understood or spoke were:  
 Rescue to suppliant! or Freedom to captive!  
 You were the sun dazzling every eye  
 But how now since two others have appeared?  
 May they live the life of sun and moon to revive  
 Each other by their light and be envious  
 May they not rule except kingdoms of the enemy  
 And not inherit except what they fight for  
 May the two sons of any enemy increase for him 45  
 With the two ya letters of little men  
 A prayer like praise without hypocrisy  
 The heart brings it to the heart  
 You appear in it like the temper  
 Of a Yemeni sword which it becomes in you  
 Except for your existence among men they would be  
 Nonsense like words without meaning.

The rose is true to that which it asserts:  
 That you make this scattering shower  
 Whenever he mingles the wind with it  
 A sea holds as if in its water a red fruit  
 The prosaist of swords scatters blood  
 And every word that he speaks is wisdom  
 And horses with estates interspersed between  
 And perfect flocks and revenge  
 The rose shows us, if one complains of his gift,  
 A finer thing than it in his bounty's peace  
 Tell it: You are not the best that he scatters  
 Indeed generosity has taken refuge with you  
 For fear of evil eye lest it be overcome  
 Blindness strike an eye with what it sends.

283 And he spoke also praising him and the news had just arrived concerning the rout of Wahsudan the Kurd.  
 (775)

Be a third with us, O tell of the abandoned camp  
 We weep and the camel groans beneath us  
 Or do not, for it is no blame for a tell  
 Indeed tells have their own kind of action  
 If you could speak you would say by way of excuse:  
 My trouble is not yours O man  
 I would weep for you as one who suffers  
 But I do not weep for I am one they ruined  
 They were the ones to saddle up while I stayed  
 The days of their camping have elapsed  
 The beauty travels every time they settle  
 And settles with them wherever they do  
 In my eyes there is a gazelle that governs them  
 A bedouin, the people are charmed by her  
 The food complains of her long absence  
 And her inaccessibility, but who can hold her?  
 What she leaves in the bottom of the milk cup  
 She leaves as musk and honey.  
 She said: Are you not well? I said to her:  
 You have taught me that love is drunkenness  
 If Fennachosroe were to overtake you at dawn  
 And you came alone, wooing would be hard  
 His horsemen would stand off from you  
 For beauty is clever at killing  
 You are doing nothing and your guest  
 Is a king of kings and such as you are stingy  
 Will you refuse him hospitality and insult him  
 Or be lavish with him in what he asks?  
 No, it is not right in what is proper for him  
 This stinginess, nor this bad temper or fear  
 He is a king who when the lance reaches him  
 It bends, we think of him and it straightens

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If those before him were not weak in respect to  
 What they ruled they were lax compared to him  
 Then the one who has knowledge came to the world  
 And plains and mountains came with pleas  
 Complaint of the sick to one who is their surety  
 If sickness might not pass from a body  
 They say: May your bravery not deceive you 20  
 Go on for your soul has no limits set to it  
 He is the ideal if a proverb is current  
 Or if asked on battle day: Who is the hero?  
 Numerous troops of clients come to him  
 Without any gear except hobbles and clogs  
 For the hobbles are used for the horses  
 And the clogs are busy with Bactrian camels  
 They say good evening with hands full of gifts  
 As those, or what is left, or the cash  
 Men excite desire for a shower from his hand 25  
 Spear shafts grow too by yearning for him  
 A shower which generosity lengthens for him  
 And glory not mere trefoil and water lilies  
 It flows to the rocks of earth and stays there  
 To shorten the teeth of men with lapping it  
 And if their front teeth were not worn down so  
 For whom would kisses be saved and stored?  
 In his face from the light of Creator is  
 Power which is from miracles and prophets  
 And when the hearts reject his judgments 30  
 Heads will enjoy the decrees of his swords  
 And when the battalions refuse to submit to him  
 They submit to him by means of pliant lances  
 Wahsudan are you content with judgment they gave  
 Or think to increase bereavement of mothers?  
 They came to your country, those unsheathed ones  
 It was as if flames were between the lances  
 The men had narrowed their eyes to slits  
 And horses looked askance with their eyes  
 They came to you and no power was in their coming 35  
 And no break between them and those afar  
 Those at Rayy did not know whether they had  
 Decamped or if they returned to camp  
 You came with determination but not as a lion  
 You left in flight and not as a mountain goat  
 You gave them their weapons and their hands  
 And something that no eye could take in  
 Most generous of kings at handing over kingdoms  
 One who almost handed over his head too  
 Except for ignorance you would not have shuffled 40  
 Toward people who drown you if they spit  
 They did not approach secretly nor conquer  
 By deceit, nor were they aided by treachery  
 His experience met no better horsemen than you  
 Except when the cunning was put to the test  
 No one need feel shame if it is said to him:  
 The house of Buuyi strove with you or won

Power, pardon, promise, bounty, request  
 Wealthy, elevated, eminent, ruling, just  
 Above the heavens and above what they seek  
 When they aim at a goal they stoop to it  
 Their noble acts cut as if they were their swords  
 And when traitors make excuse they accept it  
 They do not make a show against their opponents  
 With sword when reproof can take its place  
 For Abu Ali is the one who has the victories  
 And Abu Shuja is the one who has perfection  
 This one's best blessing was sworn to that one  
 In the cradle: May hope never leave them.

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284 And he spoke consoling Abu Shuja Adud al Daula for his aunt. (781)

May it be the last that the king is consoled for  
 This which has been imprinted on his heart  
 Not with fear but with rage since he suspects  
 That fate has got power over him by violence  
 If the world knew what troubles he had  
 The days would be ashamed of their censure  
 Perhaps they think that one who is  
 Not at home with him is not of his family  
 And that one who has a house at Bagdad  
 Is not within the scope of his sword  
 That only ancestors of a man are his home land  
 One who is not in it is not of his loins  
 I fear that his enemies will start thinking  
 And hurry out of fear to his side  
 There is no escape for mankind from that couch  
 No turning that bed upside down at one's side  
 There one forgets what his pleasure was  
 And death has no taste of its agony  
 We are sons of death so why should it bother us?  
 We loathe what we cannot escape drinking  
 Our hands are greedy for our souls  
 As rivals to time but they are his property  
 For these souls are of air  
 And these bodies are of dust  
 If the lover thought about the end of beauty  
 That enslaves him he would not be enslaved  
 The horn of the sun is not seen in the east  
 But souls complain of its setting  
 The keeper of the sheep dies in his ignorance  
 The death of Galen with all his medicine  
 And often he outlives him  
 And is more secure in his mind  
 The end of one who excels in peace  
 Is like the end of one who excels in war  
 May the seeker not attain his end  
 Whose heart is fluttered by his fears

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I ask Allah's pardon for the soul that is gone  
 Its bounty cancels out its sins  
 Telling over the good deeds was as if  
 The lavish bounty was curse on it 20  
 It wanted its life from the love of high things  
 But it did not want life from love of itself  
 The grave digger thought that it was alone  
 But its glory was its companion in the grave  
 Manliness was manifest in its memory  
 The femininity was hid under the veil  
 Father's sister of the best of Emirs who called  
 And said: Warriors to arms! and they answered  
 O Adud al Daula whose support is 25  
 His father, and the heart is the mind's father  
 Those who are his sons are his father's ornaments  
 As if they were flowers on his stalk  
 An honor to the age of whose people you are one  
 As nobility you appeared as one of its sons  
 Grief is a conquered hero, may he not revive  
 Your sword was courageous, may it not be dull  
 It would seem to me that the moon in the dark sky  
 Should not let one star lost make him desolate  
 Beware of weakening under the burden of whatever 30  
 Another brings you in his letters  
 Indeed you have borne heavy burdens before this  
 No need in extremity for you to drag them  
 The courage of a man leads him to praise  
 And fear leads only to calamity  
 Such as you turn back grief in its attack  
 And drive back the tears from their fall  
 Truly permanence depends on virtue  
 Truly submission is to one's Lord  
 I should not say "such as you" but mean rather 35  
 Except for you, O unique one without compare.

285 And he spoke also praising him and commemorating the  
 rout of Wahsudan. (786)

Are you a visitor O dream, or a nurse  
 Or does one who sent you think I am asleep?  
 It's not as they think; a faint overtook me  
 And you came seeking me in the interval  
 Come back, restore it; what a wonderful dying!  
 My breast pressed to her swelling breasts  
 And be generous with what he was stingy of  
 With the wide spaced, handsome, cool teeth  
 When his dreams circle about us 5  
 I laugh at him since I praise him  
 And he said: If he could fulfill his need with  
 Us he would not bother to increase his love  
 I do not deny a favor which it perhaps has done  
 Something accomplished or even promised

Eye cannot tell parting between the two of them  
 The union with dreams is only exhaustion  
 O soft hand filled with happiness  
 On a swift camel with a necklace  
 If you do evil to my heart I will return love 10  
 The most ignorant of men is a lover who hates  
 You have told O night of her long loose hair  
 So tell of her absence to my wakeful eyelids  
 My weeping has been long at the memory of her  
 You too are long until both of you seem one  
 What is the matter with these wandering stars?  
 It is as if they were blind and had no leader  
 Or like the mob of kings on one side  
 Abu Shuja alone over against them  
 If they flee he will reach them and if they stand 15  
 They fear loss of their gains and inheritance  
 They hope for powerful forgiveness of one  
 Whose face is blessed with generous glory  
 He is serene and if a dove take refuge with him  
 She does not fear the archer nor the trapper  
 If the wild beasts are grazing they think of him  
 So no hunter or fowler can scare them  
 Every hour news is brought to him  
 Of armies destroyed by his swords  
 Or covered with blood the camels swiftly 20  
 Bring him the heads with the crowns attached  
 O forearm whose lord is himself a forearm  
 Traveling by night you awaken the red grouse  
 Rain cloud of death and life at the same time  
 But you are not lightning nor thunder  
 You took but did not accept from Wahsudan's  
 Injuries what his corrupt mind received  
 He began with his tricks as a goal  
 But war is the goal of the trickster  
 What is there for one who comes to you with war? 25  
 He blames the choice even if a troop comes  
 Without weapons except hope in you  
 So he wins by aid and flees with guidance  
 Fate strikes the one who strikes at you  
 Whether in the position of ruler or ruled  
 You gave two days to his armies' destruction  
 But you were not the victor nor the witness  
 Absent he did not hide for his vicars were 30  
 His father's army and his ancestors' rank  
 All of the Khatti straight ones too  
 Giants shake them on giant beasts  
 Blood shedders that do not call for distinctions  
 Between fresh blood and the stinking corpse  
 When death appears then I call to it:  
 Change the nun for a dal in Had, death.  
 When a horse knows who it is attacking then  
 He falls down prostrate to his authority  
 Tirm was so enveloped in dust  
 That camels seeking it would be lost

One asks people of the fortress about the king  
 But he had changed to a wandering ostrich  
 The land is waste lest he get too close to it  
 And all of it groans ungratefully at him  
 There is no fortress or building for protection  
 Nor can building enrich nor a builder  
 So rage at these people O Wahsudan they were not  
 Made except for the enemy's rage and envy  
 They look at you only to test you a bite to eat  
 Before their people return with provisions  
 Abandon that robe for one who is worthy of it  
 Not everyone worships whose forehead bleeds  
 If the Emir had not been in command when you  
 Met him he'd have given success to a deputy  
 The dawn shook him when he did not see with him  
 The victory messenger as if he were bereaved  
 But the event is Allah's; many a striver  
 Would not lose except that he strives  
 Many a cautious one when the arrows are flying  
 Flees a weak arrow to one that pierces  
 The killer does not care whether the enemy  
 Who receives it is standing or sitting  
 May the praise I have fashioned have as ransom  
 The man described in it and so be immortal  
 I have twisted a bracelet for the forearm  
 Of the state whose support is his father.

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286 And he spoke praising Adud al Dawla and commemorating  
 the hunt at the place known as Dasht Arzan. (792)

How natural for the days and my nights that  
 They say: What's wrong with him and with us?  
 Not that this is my way of talking, a youth  
 Who has undergone the double fires of war  
 Drinking from them and bathing in them  
 Nor did whoring touch me in my heart  
 And if the armorer were to tug at my skirt  
 Offering me two kinds of garments  
 I'd not name coat of mail but rather greaves  
 And why not since there is my guide  
 The rider of Majruh and Shamal  
 Abu Shuja the conqueror of warriors  
 The wine bearer of the cup of death and blood  
 As he routed the Qufs on flight's evening  
 He beat down the Kurds in battle until they  
 Defended themselves with flight and retreat  
 A destroyer who brought defeat and deportation  
 And hunting down horsemen with the lance  
 And with new made polished heirlooms  
 He goes to chase beasts in the mountains  
 And in the soft places of meadow and sands  
 On the blood of men and their limbs

Apart from the troop on the young horse  
 Out of greatness of spirit not weariness  
 Out of restraint not desire for substitutes  
 They make no commotion except for moving on  
 For they have been beaten for neighing  
 Every rider on them is sick with awe  
 Their mouths are held out of fear of a cough  
 From the rising of the sun to its setting  
 Whatever flies with swiftest wind cannot escape  
 And whatever runs disappears into thickets  
 Nor is there protection in the waters or lakes  
 For flesh either forbidden or permitted  
 Truly souls are prepared for death  
 May it pour down on the length of Dasht Arzan  
 Between the wide prairies and the woods  
 The pathways of boars and lions  
 The piglets are close to the cubs  
 The bear towers over the gazelles  
 Uniting the opposites and the shapes  
 As if Fennachosroe most perfect in virtue  
 Feared that they would lack completeness  
 So he brought elephants and their riders  
 The mountain goats are hobbled with rope  
 Submissive to the lassoes of men and horses  
 Walking the gait of sheep and camels  
 Turbanned with the dried out roots  
 They are born beneath the heaviest of burdens  
 When they turn to look at their shadows  
 They show themselves to be the ugliest of shapes  
 As if they were born for baseness  
 Increasing the shame of ignorance  
 Members not useful in any case  
 To the rest of the body a defect  
 The buck of the antelope lives higher  
 Horns bent back like a bow of yew  
 With the point of the tip on the flanks  
 They almost pierce the haunches  
 They have a black beard without a mustache  
 It is good for a laugh but not for reverence  
 Its growth is all thickened with spittle  
 Not anointed with musk or unguent  
 It is content with oil and urine  
 And with piercing spice and manure  
 If fixed to the cheeks of a deceiver  
 He makes it serve as a net for wealth  
 Between evil judgments and children  
 With a pretense that the back is the front  
 It does not show the face from the rear  
 So they are left to a downpour of arrows  
 From mountain's bottom and the heights  
 The bows of the men have bid them farewell  
 In every liver the weight of an arrow head  
 And so they plummet from the peaks  
 Upside down the hoofs and bounding

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Leaping through the air on their backs  
 On the fastest way down to the depths  
 They sleep there the sleep of the lazy  
 On their necks they hurried the fastest  
 They don't complain of weariness  
 Nor do they take care about going astray  
 There was a reason for the departure from them  
 The desire of the much for the little  
 The wild beasts of the upland grieved due to it  
 They were frightened in Selma and Qabal  
 With the fear of lizards and iguanas  
 And dust colored ostriches and their chicks  
 The fawns and the wild cows and buffalo  
 They listen for his delightful news  
 But the dumb beasts can't send to ask  
 Their barren and foals, camels with their young  
 That he would send them a governor  
 So he might rule them with bridle and saddle  
 To make them safe from such terror  
 And not make anxiety and share out the pasturage  
 And the water of every downpour that flows  
 O power of those who travel and return  
 If you wished you could hunt lions with foxes  
 Or if you wished to drown the enemy with mirages  
 Or put in place of weapons of war  
 Pearls, you could kill with joy  
 Nothing remains but to hunt down the goblins  
 In the dark of the absent moon  
 On the backs of camels not needing water  
 You would reach the top of your hopes  
 You leave nothing there except the impossible  
 That exists nowhere and is not obtainable  
 O forearm of the state and of the heights  
 The lineage is gems and you are the owner  
 Of a father and not of earrings and bracelets  
 A jewel to adorn with beauty from yourself  
 Many an ugly one is heavily bejeweled  
 Finer than hers is beauty of unadorned  
 The honor of a young man is in himself and acts  
 Of those before him of mother and father.

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287 He spoke bidding farewell to Adud al Dawla and this was the last which he spoke and his soul flew away from its place. (800)

He ransoms you who falls short of your measure  
 There are no kings but those who ransom you  
 If we said: Your ransom is one equal to you  
 We'd ask for support of those who hate you  
 We'd make safe from being your ransom every soul  
 Even if it is chief support of your kingdom

Or he who thinks the scattering of corn is bounty  
 But sets up traps under what he scatters  
 Or he who grovels in the dirt and sleeps in it  
 Though the rank he attained touched the sky  
 And even if their hearts were faithful  
 Yet their characters would be your enemy  
 Since you hate a worldly esteem that is thin  
 When you see that its property is fat  
 I am about to go and you put a seal on my heart  
 With your love lest other than you come there  
 And you have loaded me with thanks large  
 And heavy so that I can scarcely move with it  
 I am afraid that it will be hard on the animals  
 They cannot go with us without staggering  
 Perhaps Allah will make this departure so  
 It helps us remain under your protection  
 If I were able I would lower my eyes  
 And not look anywhere until I see you  
 Can patience exist apart from you if your broad  
 Bounty contents me but does not content you?  
 Will you leave me with the sun's eye as my shoe  
 So that my walking in it cuts the shoelace?  
 I see how I grieve and we have not yet gone far  
 And how will the journey be when it proceeds?  
 This passion before departure is like a sword  
 And here am I not yet hit, but I am marked  
 As time for good-by confronted us my heart said:  
 You keep quiet, don't let your mouth run on.  
 And if it weren't that the most that you desire  
 Was return, I'd say: May you not get your way.  
 You healed me from sickness with sickness  
 And what healed killed while you were sick  
 So I veiled from you our secret talk and I hid  
 The desires which I have long been fighting  
 When I rebelled against them they were strong  
 And if I submitted to them they were weak  
 To many a one this side of Thawiya in grief  
 My approach will say: This for that.  
 Many a one with sweet saliva when the camels kneel  
 Will kiss saddle and saddle cloth of Turwak  
 He is forbidden to touch perfume after I am gone  
 And the scent does cling and linger  
 And he refuses his lips to every lover  
 But gives it to the bashama and arak  
 Sleep was talking to his eyes about me  
 Would that sleep would tell of your bounty  
 About Bactrians that do not reach Iraq except  
 They grow thin, once strong, and fleshy  
 I am content for his eyes to dream  
 And when he awakes that he think it a lie  
 Nor anything but that he listen and I tell--  
 May he not be enslaved with love of you  
 How much joy for the listener who does not know  
 Whether to marvel at my praise or your rank

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And that perfume, your honor, is musk  
And this poetry is my pestle and mortar  
But do not praise them but praise a hero  
Who if his eulogist name him not means you  
Most noble, his qualities are from his father  
Tomorrow your sons meet your father in them  
Among friends there is one marked with love  
Others claim to share with him  
When tears on cheeks are compared to each other  
It is clear who weeps and who pretends to weep  
The virtues of Abu Shuja condemn  
The latter, for my eyes which are afar  
So distance, move from front feet of my camels  
They have spear points' impact in your sides  
Whatever you wish O highway let it be  
Suffering or escape or destruction  
If we travel while Tishrin has yet five days  
They will see me before they see the Fish  
The favor of Fennachosros will drive off from me  
Enemy spears and thrusts on the journey  
I wear by his good pleasure on my road  
Armor that bristles so it frightens heroes  
Who will substitute for you when we have parted  
When all men are false except you?  
I am nothing but an arrow in air; it returns  
When it finds nothing to hold to there  
Ashamed that my Allah should see me when  
I left your house and he has chosen you.

## NOTES

Poem 1. The term Shawmiyyat uses the same root letters as a verb which means to bring bad luck. Poems which are preceded by the words: He spoke in his youth, were probably composed from the poet's tenth to fifteenth year.

2. The poet's father, who accompanied him in his early journeys, died when he was about 17 years old.

3. Kufa, where the poet spent his boyhood, was a stronghold of the Shi'ite branch of Islam. The man who is eulogized in this poem traced his ancestry to Ali, the head of the Shi'ites and son-in-law of the prophet Muhammad. The patron was a rich inhabitant of Bagdad where the poet had gone after his early two year stay in the Syrian desert and return to Kufa. The poet at the time was about fifteen years old. This poem is in the form of the classical qasida. Line 22, Quraish is the Meccan tribe to which the prophet's ancestors belonged. Line 24, an ancestor of the prophet.

4. Long hair braided and unbraided is bedouin style. Between the ages of ten and fourteen the poet spent two years in the desert with a bedouin tribe. Since his father was a poor water carrier the change from city to country life would not have been extreme. It was thought that the language and life style of the bedouin was purer than that of the city people. A Carmathian sack of Kufa in 312 A.H. may have driven the poet's family to the desert.

5. A qadi is a Muslim magistrate. The opponents of the Shi'ites were the Sunni who made much of legal authority. Line 3, an additional meaning for dhahabi is refuse.

6. This man is said to be a certain Abu Fadl who patronized the poet after his return from the desert to Kufa. He is said to have led the poet astray with his knowledge of Greek philosophy, particularly that of Aristotle. Line 19, the poet's mother died very early and he was brought up by his grandmother.

8. and 9. These poems and others later reflect the intransigent attitude of violence that led to the turmoil created in Islamic society by the Carmathians. Their communist and anarchist ideas would have been well known to the poet.

10. This patron lived in Manbij in Syria about 50 miles west of Aleppo. The Kilab was a major Arab tribe as the Tamim were a confederation of tribes. Other tribal names are also mentioned in the poem. The patron's name is given by Blachere in his Un poete arabe du IVe siècle de

l'Hegire (Xe siècle de J.-C.): Abou-t-Tayyib al-Mutanabbi, 1935, as Sa'id ibn al Abbas, prefect of Manbij. He had two sons who were to become governors of Aleppo. Line 11, Zuhal is the planet Saturn.

11. Blachère thinks this contains a part of a poem intended for Abu Abbas Ahmad ibn Kaigalag, governor of Aleppo. A relative of his is the subject of a satire in poem 140. Line 4 is addressed to the lover's companion. Arabic poetry often shifts the person referred to from one verse to the next. Line 12 is addressed to the mistress and line 16 to the saki or wine bearer. Dar Athla in line 3 is near Kufa. Nakhla in line 18 is near Ba'albek. Line 33, a characteristic letter of the Arabic alphabet. Salih in line 36 is mentioned in the Koran as a prophet rejected by the Thamud tribe.

12. and 13. This patron lived in Tripoli, a port city now situated in Lebanon. He was also the patron to whom poem 40 was dedicated. Line 2, Hatim was a proverbially rich and generous Arab. Line 3, Abu Qasim means father of generosity.

14. Blachère suggests that this and other passages point to the lack of success which the teen-age prodigy found with some patrons.

15. This man may be, according to Blachère, a local celebrity of the Roda, a clan of the Tai tribe, situated near Manbij in north Syria.

16. This patron Blachère also locates in Manbij. Khorasan is in Persia and may indicate the origin of the man.

17. The Tanukhi were a south Arabian tribe many families of which settled near Latakia, a port city of Syria. The poet felt that his own ancestors had come from Yemen in South Arabia whose glorious cultural past was balanced against that of the north Arabs. Qudha is a clan. Khindif was a feminine ancestor of the south Arabs.

18. See the note to poem 31. Line 4, the constellation of Arcturus.

19. This poem in lines 22-23 contains allusions to the Carmathian Grand Master with whose violent attacks on the social structure the poet sympathizes.

20. This poem suggests an attempt on the part of a friend to restrain the poet's growing revolutionary tendencies.

21. The Sera is a tributary of the Forat or Euphrates.

26. Blachère thinks that the Ad bedouin mentioned in line 3 were involved in the poet's attempt to stir up rebellion against the authorities. The Ad inhabited the Samawa desert which stretches between Latakia and the Euphrates and where the poet spent his early desert years. Line 25, tribes beaten by the patron's men. Line 35 is not in some texts. Al Wahidi's text has a few other such variations.

27. This man according to Blachère was the son of the patron to whom poem 15 was dedicated. Line 13 mentions an eponymous ancestor of the Arabs from the time of Noah.

Line 29, a clan of the Tai. Wa'll is another clan.

28. The same patron as in the previous poem. Line 35,

the patron's clan. Line 36, Arabian mountains.

29. This was a jailer who befriended the poet during his stay in prison which began in 322 when he was 19 and lasted for two years.

30. Blachère gives the name of the authority as Ishaq ibn Kaigalag. See poem 140. Line 14, Badr al Karchani was appointed governor of Aleppo by the Caliph al Radi. He was driven out by the Ikshid of Egypt who gave the city to Ibn Kaigalag.

31. An anecdote relates that the poet told this man he was a prophet come to redress the evils of the times. He said that he had a new Koran of 114 chapters and could control the rains. This latter detail may be referred to in poem 18. The anecdote is one of the sources for the poet's title of al Mutanabbi which means the would-be-prophet.

32. Evidently the poet had to suffer remarks as to his origins.

36. Farqad: two stars near the pole.

39. Khortum, a wine. The word has the meaning of snout.

40. See note to poems 12 and 13.

42. Blachère says the poet received only 20 dirhams for this poem. A dirham is a small silver coin and would represent very poor payment in the poet's day. For another poem he received only one dinar, a gold coin. This patron is said to have been a cavalry commander. Line 17, Dhu'l Qarnain is mentioned in the Koran. He may be Alexander the Great. The commentators are scandalized by the lines that follow. Line 23, Iblis, Satan.

44. This patron resided in Manbij. He is thought to be a descendant of the famous poet al Buhturi who was one of al Mutanabbi's best loved models along with Abu Tammam. Line 12, Qahtan is the Biblical Joktan.

46. Line 12, eponymous heroes of the ancient Arabs.

47. This patron was the captain in the pay of the Ikshid of Egypt who in 330 seized Aleppo from the forces of the Caliph. His name shows that he was of Byzantine origin.

48. Line 3, Yazdath was governor of Aleppo when Masawar seized it from the Caliph. Line 12, agricultural towns in Iraq.

49. See note to poem 17. The dead man was a resident in Latakia. Line 5, Radwa is a hill near Mecca which pilgrims visit. Line 21, two angels of the last judgment.

51. This man was a brother of the man mourned in poem 49. He was governor of Latakia for a time. Line 6, Mahris are fine horses.

52. Line 10, Suhail, a star.

53. Line 6, Qarqarfa, a wine. Line 9, Rudaini, spears. Suraiji, swords.

54. This man was a cousin of the patron of poem 51.

55. Line 3, al Khidr, the Green One, is mentioned in the Koran. He figures in mystical literature such as that by Ibn Arabi.

56. According to Blachère this poem was composed when

the Emir was suppressing the rebellion of the Banu Qasis in the vicinity of Latakia in 319 when the poet was 16.

Line 4, Khatti, a synonym for fine spears.

57. The same man as in poem 54. Line 13, Thubair, mountain in Arabia. Line 33, place name referring to South Arabia.

58. Line 22, Mahatta, the patron's clan. Line 33, Bu-haira is the lake of Tiberias. The Ikshid Muhammad Tughj had entertained the poet there. The Gaur is the valley of the Jordan.

59. This and the following poem is dedicated to a man resident in Antioch.

60. Line 24, famous lovers celebrated in a well known series of poems.

61. The Malikite system of jurisprudence was one of several accepted interpretations of Koranic justice.

62. A hajib was the chamberlain of an Emir. Line 14, Dijla, the Tigris.

63. The Rum are the Romans or Byzantine Greeks.

64. A katib was a secretary. Line 35, rajul, Arabic for leg or man.

65. Blachere says Qansarin is the place where the poet was arrested before his trial and imprisonment.

67. This patron had played a role in the trial of the unfortunate mystic al Hallaj in Bagdad some years before. A.J. Arberry in Poems of al Mutanabbi, 1967, says that Auraji implies that he was a clerk in a revenue office.

Line 11, thoroughbred camels.

68. This hunting piece is in the style made famous by Abu Nuwas, the Bagdad poet of the times of Harun al Rashid. Line 2, herbs.

69. This and the following poems were composed during a stay of more than a year with the governor of Tiberias. He was mentioned in poem 30 as the dispossessed governor of Aleppo.

71. Badr was the lieutenant of Ibn Raiq who succeeded in driving the Ikshid from Syria as the leader of the Caliph's forces there. Al Muttaqi was the ruling caliph at the time. Line 17, Badr is Arabic for full moon. Line 30, Thurya are the Pleiades.

76. This qasida in lines 40ff. alludes to jealousy of the poet's position with the Emir who eventually turned against him.

89. This series of poems, like others that precede, have an important role in the structure of the Diwan.

97. This patron was the poet's refuge from the displeasure of Badr. He lived at Jerash in the valley of the Jordan. He seems to have been a reader of the Koran.

Line 10, Hijaz and Nejd are in central and western Arabia.

98. and 99. These poems describe the poet's being forced to seek refuge from Badr's displeasure in the desert. Ibn Karawas was one of his detractors at the court of Badr.

100. This patron resided in Antioch where the poet went

after his retreat in the desert. Badr's death made his return to city life possible for the poet. Line 20, sunn-na, religious custom in Islam. Line 42, Hadham, a mountain in Arabia.

101. The grandmother's death occurred in 329 when the poet was 26 years old.

103. Line 33, izar, a light garment.

104. Line 25, Adnan, ancestor of the Arabs.

105. This patron seems also to have been a resident of Antioch. Line 24, nun, letter of the Arabic alphabet.

106. This man, according to Blachere, was in the chancellery of the Ikshid of Egypt whose forces in 330 entered Aleppo. This was made possible by the assassination of Ibn Raiq, the Caliph's Emir of Emirs.

107\*. This man was also one of the Ikshid's men. His father may have been governor of Antioch.

107. There are two number 107's in the text. There is no number 194. Line 26, the commentator sees satire as well as praise. The same is true of other lines. Line 38, the verses are:

My heart is split  
My tooth pulled out  
My wits darkened  
I love without return  
O darling coquette fawn  
Like a rising moon  
I saw him in his tent  
As the moon progressed  
I said: Fine, fine, fine, fine!  
Go, vile one, he said to me  
Come, get on, get on  
Be off and be off!  
Put it in my hand and mouth  
Until I let you come down.

109. This man was one of the Ikshid's men who became governor of Damascus.

111. Another of the Ikshid's men. He was son of the patron to whom poem 97 is dedicated.

112. This patron was the young nephew of the Ikshid. The latter died suddenly in 334. The nephew's court was at Ramla in Palestine. Line 32, according to Blachere the Alids of Tiberias quarreled with the poet and attempted to assassinate him.

113ff. Another series of poems of structural importance to the Diwan.

135. See note to poem 241.

137. Tahir treated the poet with great respect in spite of the hostility which the poet aroused in other members of Muhammad Tughj's court. Line 13, Kafr Aqib seems to be a village near Tiberias. The Sudanese may have been hired to assassinate the poet. The claimants are the Alids who pretend to be descendants of the prophet. Line 21, descendants of the prophet's daughter Fatima. Line 26, Tihami, the prophet as a dweller on the west coast of

Arabia. Line 29, Nasibis were enemies of the Alids.

140. This man was the governor of Homs when the poet was imprisoned there in 324. Now in 336 he was governor of Tripoli as the poet passed through the city on his way to Antioch. He was arrested by Ishaq with orders to compose a panegyric on him. The poet refused and escaped by retreating to Damascus and hiding there. Ishaq's assassination allowed him to proceed to Antioch. Line 3, Magians were accused of incest. Line 27, Safra, Ibn Kaigalag's wife. Line 30, the patron to whose court the poet was journeying. Line 36, Ibn Kaigalag was of Turkish origin.

145. This patron was the cousin of Saif al Daula who was to be the poet's chief patron. His family was Arab and stemmed originally from Mosul. Abu Ashar was governor of Antioch at this time. Line 16, the horse on which Muhammad is said to have made the night journey to heaven.

149. Line 6, Ashar means tribe. Line 28, a place as distant as China.

159. This poem refers to an assassination attempt made on the poet by Abu Ashar. See poem 193.

160. Saif was to be the poet's patron for nine years. He had already assembled a large entourage of poets, philosophers, astronomers, historians, philologists and other learned men in his court. A library of 10,000 books was at their disposal. Payment was munificent. In addition to estates, slaves, horses, etc. the poet is said to have received the equivalent of about \$300,000 in four years. It was at this time that he married and a son was born to him. Barzuia was a Kurdish fortress that was taken by Saif.

164. Abu Wa'il was a cousin of Saif al Daula. He was governor of Homs when he was captured by a Carmathian leader named Ibn Hirrat al Rawad (Son of cat and the ashes). Blachere remarks that he was to some extent in the poet's position fifteen years earlier. He was killed in the encounter and Abu Wa'il was seriously injured.

165. Nasser had been beaten by the Persian Buuyid prince who was sultan of Bagdad. The projected battle did not occur.

167. Line 30, the poet had one son whose name was Muhsad.

174. Abu Wa'il died as a result of wounds received when he was kidnapped and rescued as mentioned in poem 164.

180. Line 4, Awasim refers to the area between Aleppo and Hamah.

182. The Muezzin calls believers to the Muslim prayer service.

184. Line 34, the wall of Mayyafariqin actually did fall on the evening after this poem was recited.

186. This expedition against the Byzantines was one of Saif al Daula's most famous. It is said he led 30,000 men. Semandu is in Byzantine territory. The Khalij is the Bosphorus. The raid ended disastrously and Saif slaughtered his prisoners and retreated in disorder. The poet was an

eyewitness to these events.

187. Line 17, the Domesticus was the Byzantine commander-in-chief. Line 24, Bardas Phocas was the Domesticus.

188. This poem was recited to build morale in the troops who were threatened by a force of 40,000 men under Bardas Phocas.

193. It is said that Abu Firas, Saif's cousin, complained that al Mutanabbi was overpaid at the rate of 3000 dinars for three qasidas in a year. This poem was recited before Saif who had lent an ear to a clique hostile to the poet. Lines 6ff. raised a storm in their allusion to the defeat of Saif in the raid described in poem 186. Abu Firas, himself a considerable poet, accused him of plagiarizing line 13 and other poetic faults.

196. The mim rhymed qasida is poem 193.

197. Line 22, the Time of Ignorance was the period before Islam.

201. The Sheik al Missis was the master of drinking.

204. The letter concerned the release of prisoners held by Saif.

219. Line 12, sin, sign of the future tense in Arabic.

222. The envoy's name was Paul Monomachus.

224. The verses were by Muhammad ibn Sa'id the Katib.

226. It is said that the Byzantine force numbered 50,000 men, a very large number for these times. Line 13, grammatical sign to indicate the jussive mood. Line 19, the constellation of Gemini.

233. Al Nabigha, one of the best known pre-Islamic poets.

234. Saif did not acquire his honorary title until after this poem was composed.

236. The oath refers to the Byzantine general's pledge to the Emperor that he would put a stop to Saif al Daula's raids. He failed to do this. The name of the Patricius was John Tzimichus arabicized as Shamushqiq. Line 12, the Byzantines suffered a defeat here in which they lost 7000 men.

238. Line 6, the Jezirah is between Iraq and Syria. Line 9, Falata is a substitute name. Her real name was Khawla.

241. The break with Saif came during an assembly when the poet and the grammarian Ibn Khalawaih were discussing language. The poet pressed his advantage too far and taunted his opponent with his Persian origin. At this point Ibn Khalawaih struck him with a key and blood flowed from his face. Saif refused to redress this wrong and al Mutanabbi was allowed to withdraw to Damascus in the beginning of

346. From there he went to Ramla where he composed poems 135-136. From there he went to Egypt where another former patron Ibn Rudhbari (poem 109) was situated. Kafur, his chief patron there whose name means camphor (with an allusion both to its smell and its whiteness), was much more powerful and wealthy than Saif. His other name Abu Musk means father of musk. His gifts to the poet included some 20,000 dinars in cash and in addition much beside. He did not, however, grant the poet a governorship as the poet

claimed he should. Egypt in Arabic is Misr which has the further meaning of populated place as contrasted with more sparsely settled areas of the Middle East.

242. Kafur was a Nubian slave. Line 6, he worked for an oil merchant before he was freed by the Ikshid. The satires were not made public until the poet left Egypt.

245. Line 19, two slaves were gifts of Kafur. Line 31, Hiran, a lake in Syria.

248. Line 27, Dailami, Turks. Line 29, Muqattam, hills near Cairo.

250. The poem refers to a plot which attempted to overthrow Kafur on behalf of the Ikshid's son Onagur. Line 20ff., stock examples of rebellion that failed.

254. Shabib was a bedouin who was Kafur's governor in Damascus. His rebellion ended when he died accidentally. Line 6, Qais represents the northern Arabs who were enemies of the southern Yemeni who, in turn, were makers of fine swords.

256. Line 39, the two words sound alike in Arabic.

257. Line 1, references to Kafur as a barber.

261. Arafat, one of the stations for pilgrims at Mecca and so the name for one of the festivals involved in the pilgrimage.

263. This episode occurred at Tabuk in Hisma where the poet stayed about a month on his way from Egypt.

266. The poem makes a joke of the deception caused by a mirage.

267. The places mentioned in the poem are on a line due east from Cairo to Kufa since the poet did not dare to go through the settled places of Palestine or Syria for fear of Kafur. Line 30, Ibn Hinzaba, Kafur's wazir whom the poet refused to write for.

269. Abu Shuja, like Kafur, was a slave raised to eminence by the Ikshid. He was of Greek origin and noted for his military boldness, whence his name Majnun, the mad one. Shuja and Fatik also suggest boldness. Line 34, h-m-d are root letters for the Arabic word for praise.

270. Line 12, daughters of Awaj are fine horses. Line 30, punishment for thieves included cutting off the hands. The Tuba or successor was the title for Yemeni kings.

272. The City of Peace is Bagdad. Line 13, the time of ignorance is the time before Islam. Line 22, said to be a reference to al Muhallabi, the wazir of Muizz al Daula whose patronage the poet refused during his stay in Bagdad.

273. Thabba was a bedouin leader of the Carmathians who were planning to attack Kufa at the time the poet was staying there after his return from Bagdad.

274. The poet had taken part in the battle which preceded the arrival of Dillar, the sultan's man to put down the Carmathians.

275. Ibn Amid was the wazir of Rukn al Daula, the Persian Buyid prince who ruled northern Persia. Arrajan was the summer residence of the wazir. He was said to be the best letter writer of the age. His gifts to al Mutanabbi amount

to 50,000 dinars plus much beside during his three month stay.

277. Line 27, *Amid* in Arabic means column or support. Line 38, verses are compared to horses because the rhythm suggests their movement.

279. Line 31, a burdah is a striped cloak. Line 32, the *Mahdi* is a leader guided by Allah.

280. *Adud al Dawla* was the Buyyid ruler of southern Persia with his capital at Shiraz. He was the most lavish of the poet's patrons giving him in less than a year over 200,000 dirhams plus many other gifts.

281. *Sha'ab Bewan* is considered one of the four Edens of the world by the Muslims. Line 10, an Arab dish of broth and bread. Line 13, city on the way to Shiraz. Line 22, *Adud* in Arabic means forearm. Line 45, adding the letter ya to a word makes it a diminutive in Arabic.

282. Shiraz is known as the city of roses.

283. *Wahsudan* was a Kurd conquered by *Adud*'s father, *Rukn al Dawla*.

284. The aunt was the sister of *Rukn al Dawla*.

285. Lines 21 and 47, again allusions to *Adud*'s name. Line 32, had ending in the letter dal means leader of army, han ending in the letter nun means death.

286. Line 6, names of horses. Persia, fars in Arabic, has the same root letters as the word for horse. Line 7, the *Qufs* were a Kurdish tribe that *Adud al Dawla* put down. Line 43, mountains in Arabia.

287. The poet and his son on their return from Shiraz were killed by bedouin led by *Fatik ibn Abu al Jahl*, an uncle of the *Thabba* attacked in poem 273. The motive was both revenge and robbery. The poet was 50 years old. Line 22, a village near Kufa where the poet had left his wife and household. Line 23, name of a camel. Line 25, names of wood used for toothpicks. Line 39, ninth month of the year.